

# frakcija

AGAZIN ZA IZVEDBENE UMJETNOSTI • PERFORMING ARTS MAGAZINE

KERSHAW

SMART

GERSTMAYER

CYELIC

PRISTAS

KUNST

CALE TELMAN

ROMS

BLAŽEVIĆ

SCHOLLHAMMER

MILLS

GOULISH

IVKOVIC



Encouraged by the debate conducted in the issue of FRAKCIJA on the topic of ENERGY (#19), we have decided to continue reflecting that aspect, dimension, phenomenon, force, perhaps even the disruptive feature of (artistic) performance which, on the level of reception, verges on impression, while in an attempt of its description within the confines of a concept, it often cannot escape from metaphor. Neither can it avoid to be pushed to the margin or even beyond the interest of theoretical or analytical discourse which, in accordance with a restatement and verification of its argumentation, aspires to a high level of exactness and coverage in order to settle down as closely as possible to science as a socially privileged discursive practice.

In contrast to such aspirations, we would like to raise an old question which is always produced by a new context and which always produces a new horizon of reference: what (and how) artists themselves can say about practices which open up the fields of different experiences between the poles of comprehension and incomprehension, representation and experience, having a defined meaning and not having meaning. How can these phenomena in the performing arts be approached from the point of view of criticism and analysis and, after all, can they in any way be approached from the point of view of dis-

course. How can one approach phenomena which seem invisible, elusive, vague, imponderable, volatile, incomprehensible, unpredictable, which (nevertheless?) occur outside the text itself, like momentary "interruptions of someone" (Lehmann) over which we yet need to try to extend the language? How can such "interruptions" be induced altogether, how and where can they be noticed, heard, experienced? In that case, can we still speak about theatre mostly as a medium, an art of representation, or, above all, as a (just intimate) happening, a play on the brink of what can and what cannot be performed, somewhere between vagueness, elusiveness, uniqueness...

A major part of this issue of FRAKCIJA consists of the participants' papers from the conference held in Zagreb, 07 - 10 November, 2002.

The topic was: VAGUE VOLATILE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

Participants: Bar Keshaw, Jackie Smart, Joachim Gerstmeier, Bojana Cvejić, Goran Sergej Pristač, Bojana Kurat, Petar Mijat, Tomislav Medak, Lada Čile Feldman, Hakea Romo, Mami Blazović, Georg Schölhammer, Chris Mills, Matthew Goulish, Lin Hixon, Irene Kikovic, Hooman Shamsi, Emil Hvalby, Aldo Michino, Susanna Winnacker, Mårten Springberg

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(an. by. Ed. M. N. Reed.)

# Radical Energy in the Ecologies of Performance

by Baz Karshaw

## 1. Vitality

The nineteenth-century American actor, Joseph Jefferson III, once said – according to Sarah Bernhardt, “very mockily” – “As for me, I find that I act best when my heart is warm and my head is cool.”<sup>1</sup> In the same century, but almost as if in another universe, Samuel Taylor Coleridge famously wrote of Edmund Kean: “Kean is an original – but he copes from himself.” To see him act is like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning.<sup>2</sup> A “warm heart” and “flashes of lightning”. In the context of comments on acting, have this in common – they signify the human vitality that is crucial to performance. While the source of such vitality remains a mystery, we know from science something of the key process which sustains it. There are many ways to describe this process, but the definition commonly found in modern physics has a special resonance for the evolving ecologies of performance: Physics talks of “the capacity of a physical system to perform work.”<sup>3</sup> Hence the physical systems that were Jefferson and Kean, as with all other human actors, possessed that capacity because their materials were infused with energy. The transformation of energy in and between materials is the process which expresses vitality, and without appropriate vitality performance is not likely to bring about change. Hence a convincing general account of the powers of performance to induce social-political change may well rest on a cogent figuring of how energy circulates in the various ecologies of performance.

<sup>1</sup> Sarah Bernhardt, *The Art of the Theatre* (Paris: H. J. Serravallo, 1901; New York: Dell Press, 1955), quoted in Peter Hay, *Theatrical Journeys* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Table Talk and Comments* (1855, quoted in Hay, *Theatrical Journeys*), p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Broeka, *Energy*.

## 2. Ecologies of Performance

Energy is a vital concept in ecology, because it is the global circulation of energy which will dictate the future health – or even survival – of planet earth. Energy economics attempts to determine the limits to growth in human societies globally. Too much growth – of population, production, consumption – may produce environmental pollution that increases exponentially to create a catastrophic resource decline. Limits theory in ecological thinking aims to figure where and how growth overshoot might occur in order to protect the negative feedback systems that help to stabilise the global ecosystem. Negative feedback systems help to conserve the balance of energies that make an ecosystem viable. Remove predators from grassland and the prey will overbreed, then overgrazing will cause soil erosion and an end to the grassland. In classical mechanics this applies globally because the principle of energy conservation states that energy can be transformed but not created or destroyed, hence wasteful transformations of energy – say burning fossil fuels to create electricity – introduce disordered energy which cannot be reused, into the environment. The same is true in biotransactions, so that all living organisms on earth ultimately depend on the sun for energy replenishment. The balance between usable and unusable energy is therefore crucial to the survival of a species, which is why the issue of sustainability – the sustainable uses of energy – is one of ecology's greatest stimulants.

But how might such analysis be useful to the study of theatre and performance? Do some theatres and performances produce more energy than they waste, and vice versa? What kinds of performance might be best for identifying threats to negative feedback systems? Do some ecologies of theatre and performance contribute more to global sustainability – to positive change – than others, and if so under what conditions? Are some energies of performance more radical in this sense than others?

These questions assume that we might be able to think intelligently about the ecologies of performance and theatre. But, as I have argued before, such a project is far from simple as it will always be enmeshed in the paradoxes that devolve from having to think about the "natural world" from within "culture". If, as David Harvey has argued, "all socio-political projects are ecological projects, then some conception of 'nature' and 'environment' is omnipresent in everything we do", it follows that trying to write about "nature" via "ecologies of performance" will be like trying to turn on the light quickly enough to see what the dark looks like. This is why new tropes for thinking have to be invented in the effort to understand the ecologies of performance without reproducing the pathologies – treating "nature" as a resource for "culture", say – that ecology aims to cure. In earlier essays I have used Biosphere II, the great glass hanger in the Southern Arizona desert, and the black holes of space to try to turn the analytical trick.<sup>8</sup> In this writing I shall draw on nuclear physics and the molecular qualities of free radicals, in an attempt partly to show that maybe Ionesco articulated a key principle in the ecologies of performance when he quipped: "Only the ephemeral is of lasting value".<sup>9</sup>

## 3. Analogies

A molecule that contains at least one unpaired electron that follows an atomic orbit on its own is called a free radical. First recognised in 1900, free radicals play a role in biology – but it is usually thought by scientists to be something of a tragic part. For example, DNA appears to be sometimes attacked by oxidation produced by free radicals, so they may accumulate the mutations that produce cancer. They may also cause some transition metals to turn carcinogenic and so they have been implicated in lung disease, diabetes and ageing. However, it is not easy to tell if free radicals are the cause or an outcome of some other cause of these disorders. In other words, like a good deal of performance, there is ambivalence in their operations, so studying them may lead to a more accurate diagnosis of the causes of disorder. However, free radicals react with other molecular elements very quickly and only last for very short periods of time. As a result, life performance, they are very difficult to study.<sup>10</sup>

The agents that cause global pollution may be thought of as free radicals. Felix Guattari points in this direction when he writes of "The gutting of the third world, demographic cancer".<sup>11</sup> From this perspective, the multinational conglomerates of globalised capital may be, more or less, free radicals. We may think of the "performance" of these free radicals as a negative energy flow with no effective feedback loop to prevent it destroying the ecosystems they depend on for their survival. Hence, other kinds of energy transformation in performance systems which create such feedback loops may become crucial to the planet's longer-term survival. But we cannot recognise the systems that may be best in this respect without creating understandings of the ecologies of performance.<sup>12</sup> Are there any performance ecologies in which the free radicals have an especially benign effect? How hard do we think of the non-biological components of ecosystems in order to turn this analytical trick, in which the negative becomes a positive? Perhaps Picasso's terrific dictum may give us a clue: "Art is a lie that makes us realise the truth".<sup>13</sup>

## 4. Contemporary Theories – Radical Ecology

By "ecologies of performance" I mean the complicated and unavoidable inter-dependencies between every element of a performance event and its environment. These inter-dependencies ensure that the smallest change of one element in some way, however minutely, effects change in all the rest.

<sup>8</sup> David Pepper, *Modern biotransformation: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 99.

<sup>9</sup> David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 144.

<sup>10</sup> See Richard, "The Thermal Biosphere and Ecologies of Performance", *New Theatre Quarterly*, 16(1): Part 2, NTQ 162, May 2000, "Ecotheatre Performance: The Environment as Partner in Process?" *The Drama Review*, 41.1 (Spring 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Eugene Ionesco quoted in Patrick Hughes and George Grellis, *Viscous Crises and Infinity: An Anthology of Resistance* (Harringtonburgh: Region Books, 1978), p. 38.

<sup>12</sup> Marshall Berman, "The Radicals".

<sup>13</sup> Felix Guattari, *Chaosmops: an ethics without a paradigm* (trans. Paul Bains and Julian Peeters) (Sydney: New York Publishers, 1985), p. 119.

<sup>14</sup> I attempted to provide such an analysis for Guattari in "Ecotheatre Performance".

<sup>15</sup> Hughes and Grellis, p. 99.



Different types of performance possess different ecologies in ways that make it difficult to say in general that one factor is more important than another for the sustainability and survival of any particular performative system, say for example, theatrical genres or forms. This is why the question of how we think of energy in performance is such a crucial one. Therefore, I am suggesting that the paradox of the possibility of positive free radicals in performance may provide a clue to identifying the more beneficial forms of performance.

In positing that particular types of energy transformations may be crucial to the "nature" of different kinds of performance ecologies - so that some energy forms may be more important to, say, their radical effects for change than others - I should stress that I am not using "ecology" metaphorically. I think that the ways in which ecologists have understood the inter-relations and inter-dependencies in and between environmental systems is largely applicable to performance. An ecology of performance is a way of trying to understand the exchange between organisms and their environment, just as is the ecology of plants or of primates: say in other words, theatrical performance or live art, say, are not systems that are different in kind to other ecological systems, though they do have their own peculiar characteristics.

This notion of an ecology (or ecologies) of performance in part harmonises with Gregory Bateson's arguments in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* where he notes a major shift in twentieth-century conceptions of the "unit of evolutionary survival" away from a Darwinian focus,

*Formerly we thought of a hierarchy of taxa - individual, family line, subspecies, species, etc. - as units of survival. We now see a different hierarchy of units - gene-in-organism, organism-in-environment, ecosystems, etc. Ecology, in the widest sense, turns out to be the study of the interaction and survival of ideas and programs (i.e. differences: complexes of differences, etc.) in circuits.<sup>12</sup>*

One such circuit in western civilisation has been commonly defined as "theatre-society" - "All the world's a stage/And all the men and women merely players" - which maybe makes the particular concern of this paper - the energies of performance - into a key characteristic of this circuit.

Post-structuralist conceptions of ecology extend Bateson's insight. Hence, Deleuze and Guattari made major contributions to ecological thinking, particularly through the concept of the "rhizome" to encompass ways in which cultural forms (with language as the main exemplar) may "communicate" with their environment and thus bring about significant "evolutionary" change.<sup>13</sup> In his discussion of ecopoetry, in *Chaosmosis*, Guattari draws an equivalence between the customary objects of ecology - biological species - and what he calls the "incorporeal species", by which he means in large part "music, the arts, cinema."<sup>14</sup> This line of thought, the foundations of which were laid in *The Three Ecologies*,<sup>15</sup> has more profound implications for theatre and performance analysis than I can hope to develop here, but the radical re-framing of conventional ecological ideas that links culture and nature in this way offers a singular challenge to established approaches to the analysis of performance-in-context and its powers for change.

Which brings me back to "energy" as having the potential to provide an explanatory keystone in the construction of general ecologies of performance: for energy has no substance, except when it approaches the speed of light and transforms into mass. Did Keen produce this effect for Colindale and might Jefferson even have achieved the same result at slower speeds? This approach to analysis presumes that the customary bifurcations between science and art constructed in the twentieth century will need yet more revision along the lines proposed by Bateson, Deleuze and Guattari. Also it may suggest fresh ways of thinking through performance. Please indulge me for a moment while I explore this through another application of the kind of analogical analysis that enables us to create homologies between, say, free radicals and performance generally.

Jefferson's warm heart and cool head may be parallel to the structure of clouds in thunderstorms, which are negatively charged at the base and positively charged at the top. However it is formed, the negative charge at the base of the cloud induces a positive charge on the earth beneath it, which acts as the second plate of a huge capacitor and a lightning flash results. Many meteorologists believe that this is how a negative charge is carried to the ground and the total negative charge of the surface of the earth is maintained.<sup>16</sup> In other words, lightning plays a vital part in the balance of the earth's ecology as it is crucial to a major global feedback system, constituting a destructive force that is ultimately benign.

Through this line of thinking perhaps we might begin to see in what ways Edmund Keen was indeed a positive free radical, powerful enough, according to anecdotal record, to cause some members of his audience to faint. Of course the analogical analyses that I have constructed may seem fanciful, but perhaps no more so than, say, some of the concepts in atomic physics which led the great English astronomer and physicist Sir Stanley Eddington to conclude that "Substance is one of the greatest of our illusions."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Gregory Bateson, *Steps towards an Ecology of Mind* (London: Abrams, 1987) p. 421.

<sup>13</sup> David B. Willis (1993) *Postmodern Ecology: Communication, Evolution and Play* (New York: State University of New York Press) p. 56 (para 11).

<sup>14</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis* p. 120.

<sup>15</sup> Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pether and Paul Sutton (London: Athlone, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Morawitz Institute, "Lightning".

<sup>17</sup> Higgs and Booth, *Vicious Circle* p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> For example, see Mark Barham, *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Patrick Peat, *Dictionary of the Theatre: terms, concepts and analysis* (Ithaca: Cengage/Saunders, Towler Theatre University Press, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> Oscar Lee Brinsford and Darlene M. Denton, *Acritical Survey of Concepts in Dramatic Theory* (London: Greenwood Press, 1991), pp. vii.

<sup>16</sup> For example, see Joseph Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

<sup>17</sup> Alison Lodge, ed., *Twentieth Century Actor Training* (London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> Philip B. Zink, ed., *Acting: The Contested* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>19</sup> Eugenio Barba and Nicola Savarese, A., *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Arts of the Performer* (trans. Richard Fowler) (London: Routledge, 1995); Jörg Grönowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Josette Féral, "Performance and Theatricality: The Subject Completed" (trans. Teresa Lyons) *Modern Drama*, vol. 30, no. 1 (March 1987), p. 114.

## 5. Energy

In my experience, virtually everyone involved in the production of theatrical performance, in one way or another, talks about energy. To produce a play, or to devise a show, is to work on the shaping of energy. Without energy there is no play, no show. Yet although energy is crucial to performance, you will not find an entry for it in the great encyclopaedias and dictionaries of theatre.<sup>14</sup> It is not a key concept in the history of dramatic theory, although you will find a number of terms – such as action, emotion, magnitude – that obviously point to it.<sup>15</sup> Surprisingly, perhaps, the word is generally absent from the indexes of books devoted to the serious analysis of acting.<sup>16</sup> More surprisingly, it does not feature in the index of a recent collection of essays on twentieth century actor training.<sup>17</sup> It is listed, though, in one of the best collections of writings on acting, but with only two entries.<sup>18</sup> The fact that it is a crucial term in the theories of Grönowski and Barba – erupting like a volcano, striking like lightning – serves to make the surrounding silence most eloquent.<sup>19</sup> Such silence may be a case of a profession or a discipline not wanting to dwell on the obvious. But also such a lack of overt interest in a crucial component of performance is very puzzling. Is there something about the energy of theatrical performance that makes it embarrassing? Why is it that science has identified several major different types of energy: mechanical, thermal, chemical, electrical, radiant, atomic – while the arts seem to have shied away from a similar exercise?

## 6. Contemporary Theories – Performative Energy

A few contemporary performance theorists have enlisted "energy" as a central concept in their constructs, but none of them have significantly nuanced it towards an ecological view. For example, Stephen Greenblatt places "social energy" at the heart of his new historicist project to rescue Shakespeare from aesthetic idollatry, but the inherent materialism in his vision of theatre as a cultural fulcrum for the exchange and negotiation of "power, charisma, sexual excitement, free-floating intensities of experience"<sup>20</sup> is always reflected through the human. New historicists and cultural materialists together tend to see the natural world as fuel for the dynamics of mankind's history. Josette Féral, in contrast, sees a kind of dematerialisation of the human in performance. Positioned as a kind of dangerous antithesis to the symbolic order of theatre, the performer becomes "the point of passage for energy flows – that traverse him without ever standing still in a fixed meaning or representation", with the purpose of playing "at putting those flows to work and seeing networks."<sup>21</sup>

This poststructuralist and postmodern view of the energy of performance resonates especially with relativity theory in modern physics, where at the right velocities matter and energy are inter-transformable. But such a radical view of the material of performing – while it has clearly informed live art, say – has still not generated much in the way of ecological theories of performance. The few theorists who have published essays on ecotheatre – most notably Bonnie Marinova, Einar Fuchs and Una Cheuchouf<sup>22</sup> – should be celebrated for their pioneering thinking, and a recent conference, "Between Nature", at the University of Lancaster, England, evidenced a wonderfully energetic interest in performer's place in the "natural world".<sup>23</sup> But still it is as if the complexity of the "topic", the heavy raft of its implications, generates an entropy that will be reversed only when a new kind of critical-theoretical mass emerges in performance studies. Perhaps a more sustained focus on energy in performance will provide a nucleus that is for turning.

## 7. Energy and presence

We have to turn to the theorising practitioners of performance in late-modernism in order to find a critical mass that focuses on energy in performance. Taking the weight of analysis in, for example, Grönowski and Barba, falls on the performer. Hence, Eugenio Barba devotes a section of his *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology* to energy. Under his heading he provides a illuminating east-west survey of the languages and techniques of performing in an effort to identify the universal principles of the actor's art in shaping "energetic and muscular power."<sup>24</sup> He identifies the outcome of that art in the Occidental traditions as the performer's "presence" and draws attention to equivalent terms in Oriental actor training systems. The ideology informing this analysis places an hierarchical distance between daily and extra-daily actions, with the implication that through his mastery of the latter the "great performer" is dealing in universal forces. The specific source of this idea can be traced back to Grönowski's "Poor Theatre" period (where Barba began his career) and to the Darwinian pronouncements found in the master's "Statement of Principles".

Why do we sacrifice so much energy to our art? – to fill the emptiness in us; to fulfil ourselves. Art is neither a state of the soul (in the sense of some extraordinary, unpredictable moment of inspiration) nor a state of man (in the sense of a profession or a social function). Art is a waking, an evolution, an uplifting which enables us to emerge from darkness into a blaze of light.<sup>25</sup>

The critical mass has not materialised from this source, perhaps, because the modernist "enlightenment" that informs its line of thinking about energy in performance has run into widespread trouble

<sup>22</sup> Bonnie Marinova, *Ecologies of Theatre: Essays at the Century's Turning* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Einar Fuchs, *The Death of Demeter: Perspectives on Theatre after Modernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); Una Cheuchouf, *Staging Place: The Geography of Modern Drama* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Barba, *Dictionary*, p. 74.

<sup>24</sup> Grönowski, *Poor Theatre*, p. 256. I am of course aware that Grönowski moved from this position in his later periods, but even there can be seen as a struggle that was a symptom of their conflicting point.

with poststructuralist and postmodernist theorists, not to mention the artists whom they study. Instead, "presence" has been problematised as a component in an essentialist subjectivity bent on oppression, by the likes of Michael Kirby, Judith Butler, Philip Auslander, Josephine Farel and many more.<sup>20</sup> In this theoretical turn performing becomes a deconstructive play between presence and absence, and energy – that most fugitive of performative tropes – slimmers into an especially elusive indeterminacy. But however dematerialised energy becomes in this new paradigm, it must always in some sense co-exist in the performer's actions, and, as Philip Zarrilli argues, "those actions are the 'material' conditions of his or her work."<sup>21</sup> Or, to rephrase this in accord with the definition of energy in physics – the capacity of a physical system to perform work – what the flow of energy affords to these actions produces the material conditions of performing. In trying to fix on a principle of energy in performing in the twenty-first century in order to figure its place in the ecologies of performance we could do worse than ponder on Dylan Swift's elegant paradox: There is nothing in the world constant but inconstancy.<sup>22</sup>

## 8. Sustainability

What are the varieties of negative feedback systems in performance, and how might we best identify them in its various ecologies? Virtually all aspects of ecological thinking, but especially the radical ecological theories of Bateson and Guattari, suggest that to start on an answer to this through a focus on the actor or performer today might be a mistake, as the "human" is the cause of current or impending ecological crises. But where else to start? I have argued elsewhere that the various "edge phenomena" of performance might be a productive area of investigation.<sup>23</sup> For ecologists, edge phenomena arise when two eco-systems rub up against each other to produce an especially rich variety of life-forms: sea and shore, river and bank, deep-sea volcanic vents. Some equivalents in performance may be the excess of spectacle – the actor-audience exchange, the flux of memory systems. How might a study of any of these phenomena help us to identify the possibility of free radicals as part of negative feedback systems in the ecologies of performance? For this "procedure" could gesture towards the trick that turns negative into positive energy, a le into a truth.

For example, one could argue that the iconoclastic acting of Edmund Kean might well have ensued from the kind of energy out of place that characterises the free radical – the spectacle of his style igniting the void between stage and auditorium so that, for at least one person in the stalls, the flux of powerful memories was revitalised – "like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning" in an age when theatre quite often literally lit up the skies of London as they blazed away. Joseph Donohue's comment on the acting of the period as "... ultimately touching on the forces that unite the theatre with surrounding life..."<sup>24</sup> has much more than a ring of truth about it. When theatres were embedded in the social like pearls in oysters the energy of an actor conceivably could infuse the environment of many more than those who attended his (or her) place of work. The longevity of the stories about spectators who fainted from the power of Kean's tightly controlled passion surely testifies to much more than the grip of gossip, even if the tales were apocryphal.<sup>25</sup> Is this how free radicals in performance may become a positive energy in the body of the social, making for a sustainable creative ecology of social change in our times?

Towards the mid-twentieth century Lawrence Olivier may have achieved a similar result, but subsequently as the theatre inexorably slipped down the league table of popular pastimes – or, what is much the same thing, rose to become mainly a cotene concern, then a segmented cultural marketplace<sup>26</sup> – the forces uniting it to surrounding life were drastically attenuated. The most common antidote adopted – embrace the progress of mediated spectacle to secure a place in the new world disorder – proved to be more of a curse than a cure: the commodification of performance in late-twentieth century theatre was bound to produce an unsustainable ecology.<sup>27</sup> The institutions survived, even sometimes thrived, but always already like coral with the life eventually drained out of them. Thus theatre "culture" almost everywhere prophetically reproduced the modernist pathology that promised an end to "nature", but very few people engaged in the art or its analysis, as we have seen, saw a truth in this. As Emerson said, the field cannot well be seen from within the field.<sup>28</sup>

## 9. Next Steps

So if the story of theatre institutions in the last century became a sub-theme in the grand narrative of global environmental decline, where else should we look for "energy out of place" as a nexus for positive free radicals in performance. Traditionally, the historical avant-garde has been thought of as that part of the total system of western cultural ecologies which highlights the dysfunctionality of old genres, says, and points to the need for art's adaptation and renewal. But it is now clear that the experimental aesthetic movements preceding World War II were mostly in servitude to modernist teleologies. By this token, the champions of late-twentieth century live art as a radical force might usefully pause before they pronounce it a new approach that sidesteps the ideological tendentiousness of traditional political theatre.<sup>29</sup> The ideological burden produced by a postmodern analysis that sees performative resistance as always already confined by hegemony and so forced into the excesses of irony in order to save a sliver of oppositional dignity is made heavier by ecological thinking. As it is not possible to

<sup>20</sup> Michael Kirby "On Acting and Not-Acting" in *Theatre: Acting* (Routledge) pp 43–58, Judith Butler *Subjects of the Matter: On the Discourse Limits of Sex* (London: Routledge, 1990), Philip Auslander *Leviathan, Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London, Routledge, 1999).

<sup>21</sup> Zarrilli *Acting Re/Considered* p 21.

<sup>22</sup> Wright and Hughes, *Visible Order* p 29.

<sup>23</sup> Baz Krikorian "On For Unruly Audiences Or Patterns of Perfectionism in Twentieth-Century Theatre" *Modern Drama* Vol 42 No 2, 2001 p 136.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Donohue, *Theatre in the Age of Kean* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), p 89.

<sup>25</sup> Roach, *The Player's Passion* p 168.

<sup>26</sup> Krikorian "On For Unruly Audiences" p 132.

<sup>27</sup> Baz Krikorian, *The Radical in Performance: Between Wright and Gaudier*, (London: Routledge, 1999) Chapter 1.

<sup>28</sup> Wright and Hughes, *Visible Order* p 54.

<sup>29</sup> Philip Auslander "Towards a concept of the political in postmodern performance" in *From Acting to Performance: essays in modern and postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1997).

<sup>39</sup> David Harvey, *Justice: Nature and the Geography of Difference*, p. 174

<sup>40</sup> Artois Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), p. 13.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Teo de Quincey, 'Sins of Multiplicity and Permission', unpublished paper.

<sup>42</sup> Guy McCauley, 'Bodyweather in the Central Desert of Australia: towards an ecology of performance', unpublished paper.

create such thinking about performance without a reflexivity that recognises some conception of 'nature' and 'environment' in omnipresent in everything we do".<sup>39</sup> The twentieth century avant-garde practitioners may need to be reminded to assess whether they ever got beyond using "nature" as raw material for "culture". Does Artaud's artist "signaling through the flames" draw attention to himself at the price of the conflagration's effects on the environment?<sup>40</sup>

Space permits only a brief test of my general hypothesis about the energies of ecologically sound live radicals in performance against a few specific examples: the Australian dancer Teo de Quincey's bodyweather project, called *The Triple Alice Labs*, and the work of the London-based eco-activist company PLATFORM. *The Triple Alice Labs* were conducted in the Central Australian Desert near Alice Springs between 1999 and 2002, and associated theoretical work is continuing currently at the University of Sydney. The project involves a group of forty participants, mostly dancers and physical theatre practitioners, who lived and worked in the desert for three weeks, following a regime of Grotowskiian rigour that, in the words of an observer, Martin Harrison, aimed to discover "...a poetics which responds to locale in Australia...a category of the ontologically unspoken...a living 'topo-analysis'".<sup>41</sup> The 'performers laboratory' was complemented by a 'writers laboratory' that attempted to document the project, and by groups of local artists - painters, poets, and so on - working alongside the performers. So what is the significance of this project to the notion of ecologies of performance and its relevance to our themes this evening?

From an unlined perspective, *The Triple Alice Labs* might be seen as just another example of self-indulgent performance art in postmodernity, no more relevant to the general public of Australia - which wasn't even represented by anything approaching a regular audience - than, oh, what might one say, unmissed lightning in the wilderness. But this ignores its place in what we might call the wider political ecology of that continent. According to Guy McCauley, who was a chief participant in the project, its location tapped in

into powerful forces that raise questions about Australian attitudes to their (sic) national identity, if the centre of the continent symbolises the 'nation's innermost self' then what can be said when this innermost self has been seen by most of its inhabitants as a void, an absence, an emptiness? Even more troubling is the relationship between the original inhabitants and the incoming waves of colonisers, settlers, and immigrants, still unresolved after two hundred years of cohabitation. [So for] European Australians the sense of place must always raise questions about legitimacy and dispossession, and will doubtless do so until effective reconciliation is achieved with the Aboriginal people of Australia.<sup>42</sup>

Aboriginal people have been involved in all of de Quincey's desert projects. In one that pre-dates *The Triple Alice*, the performers camped alongside an Aboriginal group who were claiming heritage to the dried-out Lake Mungo, a site of great ritual significance to the indigenous people. A comment from this group suggests that they may indeed have seen in de Quincey's work a kind of lightning in the wilderness that might newly energise the process of reconciliation: "...you're waking up the land".<sup>43</sup>

PLATFORM's work provides a highly contrasting but complementary perspective on ecologically responsible performance. Again, the tropes of some of their performances draw on performance art and so might too easily be dismissed as whimsical. For example, the 1992 *Self Waters* project proposed nothing less than 'the recovery of the buried rivers of London'<sup>44</sup> and included an action in which two figures followed the course of the river Walbrook.

One wears a shroud made from the pages of the London Business telephone directory. The other carries two flasks of water: one of distilled and one of undistilled drain water. At buildings blocking the course of the river its width is marked on the pavement with chocolate money and distilled water is spat at the obstructing wall. This is repeated at nine different sites, including the Bank of England. At the River Thames the shroud is removed and, after sounding the storm drain lid (a large metal hinged structure) the shroud is buried under stones at the mouth of the storm drain sluice.<sup>45</sup>

But PLATFORM's projects always incorporate a wide range of activities, so *Self Waters* spawned

the *Delta* project which led to the installation of a micro-hydro turbine in London's River Wandie - and has in turn led to the creation of the largest urban renewable energy scheme in the UK - *RENAUE* - which...received a £1 million grant from the Millennium Commission.<sup>46</sup>

The more recent 99% *Crudo* focuses on 'the culture and impact of Transnational Corporations and their dependency on oil' and includes a lecture-performance called *Killing Us Softly*, an extraordinary one-person confessional event which explored parallels "...between historical examples of genocidal psychology and contemporary corporate behaviour".<sup>47</sup> The participant-audience for *Killing Us Softly* are isolated from each other, sitting in cubicles that face James Marriot's desk, from where he tells seemingly normalizing tales about our dependency on oil, including his own family history transformed "...into a true saga of the reckless western guzzling of fossil fuels [and] his [rich] ancestors' descent into carbon addiction".<sup>48</sup> The embodied linking of personal history with corporate activities that effec-

<sup>43</sup> de Quincey, 'Sins of Multiplicity'.

<sup>44</sup> PLATFORM information leaflet.

<sup>45</sup> PLATFORM, 'Hemer Time for Visitors'.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, see also *ibid.*

www.platform.org.uk/platform  
02 13 02 e-mail platform@mac.org

<sup>47</sup> PLATFORM information leaflet.

<sup>48</sup> James Miles, 'How one family became addicted to carbon', *Quarrier*, Nov. 15, 2000, p. 16.

tively turn executives into 'unconscious' neo-Nazis raises ethical questions that impact on public responsibilities and political process, I would suggest, for all of us. In the terms of my emergent analogy, in this show the lightning strikes the same point repeatedly, to devastatingly positive effect.

I close with these two examples because I think they demonstrate how performance may dance with global forces that increasingly impinge on us all. You may have noticed that I slipped into implicating you, the reader, in PLATFORM's performative strategies by evoking the possibility of a public in my description. Of course, postmodernity implies many publics which in turn will produce a variety of politics and political processes. But I hope I have provided a glimpse of how the ecologies of performance might figure those publics as a global - and of course provisional - entity, and so suggest some necessary - though of course temporary - directions for future political strategies, at whatever level we conceive them.

No doubt such investigations will test the limits of performance analysis as they will require new ways of thinking/writing in the search for effective methods to identify radical ecological energies in performance that creates social change. The materiality-immateriality of actor/performers as free radicals is possibly only one of many surprising dynamics that a study of the ecologies of performance might reveal!

It may seem to be a long and maybe tortuous way from the 'warm hearts/cool heads' and 'flashes of lightning' of nineteenth century actors to the 'largest urban renewable energy scheme in the UK' in twentieth-first century London. But in the paradoxical territory which grows the potential for positive free radicals in the ecologies of performance it is perhaps worth pondering on George Walsby's elegant conundrum: A physicist is an atom's way of knowing about atoms.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Beebe and Hughes, *Writing Circles*, p. 19.



# Simultaneous Dimensions: *Nemesis* and the Ecology of Perception.

Jackie Smart

*Random Dance Nemesis* (2002, Sander's Walls Theatre)

photo: Rex Deeprose

"Extraterritorial dance meets reality TV"

(*Nemesis*, programme note)



Two questions posed by the symposium, *Vigues Volatiles* and *Incomprehensiveness*, were of particular interest to me as a dance analyst:

• What kinds of practice 'can open up the fields of experience which lie between poles of comprehension and incomprehension, sensual perception and representation'?

—What is the role of the analyst in relation to these practices?

The kind of practice I discuss here is itself concerned with how perception operates. It addresses this question by offering its audience an experience of multiplicity where the elements of performance coincide but do not converge, where different modes of perception are brought simultaneously into play. In this kind of practice, each element of performance reveals itself simultaneously in several dimensions. Thus, in my role as an analyst, my activity of interpretation must also divide and multiply. No singular critical language can be sufficient to represent my experience of simultaneous difference. Both the performance and my analysis of it are characterised by processes of disharmonious interactivity.

The performance I will discuss is *Nemesis*, a work produced in 2002 by Random Dance Company, which have been in existence for ten years under the artistic direction of choreographer Wayne McGregor. Random have become known for their experiments with new technology, particularly with computer-based dance programmes and internet technology. Talking about an earlier production, *Milennium*, McGregor speaks of his desire to "work with a more digital aesthetic, to recreate an environment, an ecology of space, which work[s] with the idea of a degenerating or electronic image, but [also] with a physical reality in a live space."<sup>1</sup>

McGregor's use of the word 'aesthetic' reveals his awareness of the fact that his work is located in relation to discursive practices. His statement refers us, for instance, to a notion which has been central to the discourse of dance: that of the 'physical reality' of the dancing body. The presence of this living, breathing, sweating body once maintained a privileged position as the 'essence' of dance. It is precisely the kind of multi-media practice that companies like Random undertake which has brought this privileged position under fire, but we should note that McGregor does not oppose the dancing body to the electronic image; he does not set the virtual up against the live, but rather speaks of an 'ecology', a word which conveys a sense of a relationship between the two, an interdependency where each gives something to and gains something from the other.

McGregor has said that the work he does with Random "places concepts of the body, time and space into fresh dimensions."<sup>2</sup> Once again he reveals his awareness of the connection between the experience of dance and its representation. He knows that our discursive definitions of time, space and the body condition our experiential

response to the performance and it is these conceptual definitions that he wishes to challenge, to re-locate. For McGregor then, the poles of representation and experience are inter-connected, even related. His work simultaneously reveals to us the ways in which our notions of time, space and the body are discursively constructed, and carries us away from these constructions towards other possible ways of perceiving and interpreting. *Nemesis*, I suggest, locates itself at the place where our multiple perceptual universes bleed into one another.

Before I continue with *Nemesis*, I want to consider this notion of 'ecology' in more depth. Ric Altsopp<sup>3</sup> also uses the word 'ecology'. He has proposed a notion of a 'performance ecology', where the use of the term 'ecology' does not presuppose an essential and holistic connection between nature and art but instead suggests "a set of interdependencies between conceptual, social and environmental factors". In other words, nature and art are not uniquely and permanently related to each other by means of some single unifying discourse - one does not simply produce or express or reflect the other - but they do, nevertheless, interact. They do so at multiple points and in various ways. Within this ecology, Altsopp writes that performance operates as "an unstable element or catalyst which enables people to rethink or revision or remanufacture their relationships to each other and to the interdependent worlds that are constituted by these relations."<sup>4</sup>

Performance-as-catalyst then, has concrete effects: it 'makes change', because alterations in conceptual perspectives are themselves in interaction with other sorts of environments. Hence Altsopp's model of a 'performance ecology' carries us outward from the performance itself via that performance's lines of connection and collision with the world outside the theatre.

We can compare Altsopp's model of a performance ecology to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of a 'desiring-machine'.<sup>5</sup> Deleuze, as Deleuze and Guattari express it, is a process, an ongoing, ever-changing flow. This flow is produced by the desiring-machine, a complex assemblage which operates in interaction with other complex assemblages in a continual process, each producing flows, which are then interrupted by other flows from other desiring-machines. It is this complex process of production with which Deleuze and Guattari are concerned, rather than with any singular product, which would constitute the end of or reason for the process.

Performance, expressed in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, would be a process, a collection of flows emanating from and interacting with a range of desiring machines, both productive of and subject to the transformational forces of each other. In the case of dance performance, we can imagine the choreographer, designer, composer, dancers, musicians, technicians, spectators and critics, as so many complex desiring-machines diving, proliferating, invading and cannibalising each other, deflecting, absorbing and transforming each

<sup>1</sup> McGregor in conversation with Jo Suttonworth, 25 July 1998, published in Suttonworth J & Clarke G, (1999) *Generators in Conversation*. Breton Hall College, University of Leeds. reproduced on [www.ran.danceindex.org/index.htm](http://www.ran.danceindex.org/index.htm)

<sup>2</sup> McGregor in *Animated* (autumn 2000), reproduced on [www.randomdance.org/index.htm](http://www.randomdance.org/index.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Altsopp R (2000)

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*, p4

<sup>5</sup> Deleuze G & Guattari F (1996), *Anti-Œdipus*



other's flows. This model comes us away from any singular system of interpretation, for instance authorial intention, or reader reception. Nor can we rely on the simplicity of 'objective' aesthetic analyses. All of these systems of interpretation are in operation within performance, and others too, but operating in interaction with each other in non-simple ways.

Such an ecology is in no way stable or systematic. There is no constant pattern of relationships which can be scientifically or objectively recovered in order to provide us with any one meaning or truth. The task of the analyst is to become aware of how different kinds of 'truth' or knowledge or experience, flow from the various desiring machines which make up the performance. One way to become aware of these flows is to notice how they interact. Allop's model shares with Deleuze and Guattari's, a focus on the importance of breakdown. Deleuze & Guattari write, in *Anti-Oedipus*,

*In desiring-machines everything functions at the same time, but amid hiatuses and ruptures, breakdowns and failures, stalling and short-circuits, distances and fragmentations, within a sum that never succeeds in bringing its various parts together to form a whole. That is because the breaks in the process are productive and are assemblages in and of themselves.<sup>8</sup>*

Allop's model helps us to translate this idea into performance terms. He refers us to 'trauma' induced by some of the interactions which take place within performance. These are the moments of incomprehensible ambiguity where connections between elements seem arbitrary or contradictory. They are the crucial moments in the process of 'rethinking, re-reasoning, re-mediating'. Because we don't know how to comprehend them, how to make them add up, they threaten to slip away from us, leaving a gap, a pain, a sense of loss. And it is our resistance to incomprehensibility which gives them their positive force. They force us away from the known path, onto other trajectories of perception.

Deleuze and Guattari urge us to recognize "lines of flight", flows of disruptive activity which operate between desiring-machines, and which have the capacity to "deterritorialize" and "reterritorialize" their flows. It is this activity between the machines, the complex assemblages of knowledge & interpretation, which points us to the machines themselves. We identify them only because we notice their tendency to collapse.

So, my angle of approach towards an analysis of Nemesis, is to start from noticing the disruptions to and deflections of my own interpretative flow which will point me towards those interpreting-machines I am accustomed to use, most visible when they break down and their smooth running is interrupted. I am looking for how breakdowns occur, how signifying systems wander and collide with others, how meanings multiply and diverge. I am looking for those moments I struggle to comprehend, and tracking the movements I make in trying to comprehend them.

It is clear, I hope that this process can reveal something to me about processes of interpretation, but can it also reveal the performance? Is there any such thing as the performance, outside of its interpretation? According to Deleuze and Guattari, processes of production, consumption and recording are immediately interlinked:

*There is no such thing as relatively independent spheres or circuits: production is immediately consumption and a recording process (enregisterment), without any sort of mediation, and the recording process and consumption directly determine the production, though they do so within the production process itself.<sup>9</sup>*

In terms of Nemesis I have noted that McGregor, as let's say chief production engineer, is aware of those processes of recording we call discourses. In other words, that he anticipates the consumption of his product within the process of its creation, makes that part of his creative process, which is itself anyway already informed by those other processes of recording and consumption he & his dancers encountered within their education and training. Again, it is the flow or perhaps the feedback between performance and analysis, which alert us to their activities within the performance ecology.

Let us return to McGregor's desire to bring into play "fresh dimensions of time, space and the body". I will use these three elements of dance performance as a skeleton upon which to build my analysis, noticing in particular how disruptions to one element interact with my ability to perceive and comprehend the others.

## Space

The performance offers us a range of different kinds of spatial environment. I want to focus on four of these in particular, and to explore how they operate both to define and to confuse each other. Three types of environment are introduced by means of:

- photographic slides of empty rooms which are projected onto the back wall of the stage space;
- video sequences which are similarly projected;
- spaces created by light.

A fourth environment, the theatrical space within which the bodies of the dancers move, could be said to contain, in concrete terms, the other three. This environment is itself conceived, in the traditional discourse of performance, as a space constructed for the purpose of integrative projection.

The slides projected are of blank spaces, all empty of people: there is a high, tiled foyer, perhaps the entrance hall to some Victorian town hall or library, with a corridor leading into the distance, there are derelict looking rooms with closed doors or windows leading off them, there is a small window, shot from outside, its thin curtains glowing green from an unseen light within. At its

<sup>8</sup> ibid p42

<sup>9</sup> ibid p4



most basic level, a photograph is understood as a static object: a "real" environment recorded at a fixed point in space and time. A photograph can also, however, suggest movement or transition. The dissipation of these rooms creates a sense that they are in a process of decay, of transformation from one state of being to another. The many windows and doors seem to invite entrances and exits.

There is, then, within the static image, already a possibility of movement. In addition, in *Homages*, the photographs are themselves made mobile. They change position & also change scale, appearing at one moment in the centre of the cyclorama, at another, much smaller, high in a corner. This process of zooming in and pulling out from the static image has the effect of confusing the sense of reliable and coherent vision, which the photograph conventionally offers. The changes in the scale of the photographs effect changes in visual perspective, which we might also define as visual sense. Where the original image of a room suggested emptiness, the interpretation is destabilised by a zoom which fills the frame with previously unseen detail, as if, through the magic of technology, we are offered visual access to a microscopic world usually inaccessible to us. When the camera then pulls back again, the original empty room seems different. Our trust in our own ability to see has been compromised and we now look at emptiness with a new knowledge that there is more there than meets the eye. I will call this new perceptual dimension which has been added to the space the "inhuman", or

"beyond human". It is a dimension which can only exist technologically and thus possesses a sense of the unreal or imaginary. It is a dimension which exists beyond the possibility of "natural" experience.

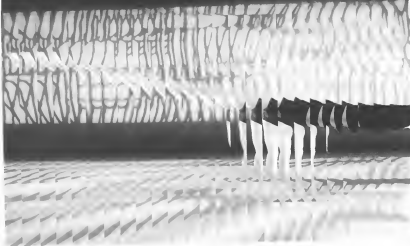
By such means, the conventional generic association of photography with reality is problematised. As the real is obscured, the imaginary comes into play. From an early stage in the production I become aware, as a spectator, of those dimensions of the theatrical space which are supplementary to my normal levels of perception, and of my activity of negotiating those dimensions in relation to my comprehension of the theatrical action. I am trying to find a conceptual location where the interaction of the real and the imaginary makes theatrical sense and in doing so I continually invent and reinvent new sets of spatial rules.

In the discourse of theatrical performance, these images of rooms immediately suggest the notion of backdrop, of a scenic location within which the stage action takes place. Notions of inside and outside are essential elements of the conceptual chain by which our understanding of space is constructed. I find myself asking, "do the dancers inhabit these rooms?" Here, the interaction of the photographic images with the spaces created by light becomes significant.

In one sequence, a pattern created by light falling through a window onto the floor of the room in the photograph is initially repeated on the stage floor by means of a pattern of light. This implies that the dance action is to be understood as taking

place within the room represented on the slide. However, the lighting pattern gradually changes, spreading across the whole stage floor, and gaining in detail as if a camera is zooming in on a single pane of glass, showing up the trails of dirt or rain which were not visible in the context of the previous scale. Where then does the leave the dancers? If this pattern represents a magnification of the window in the projected image of the room, is the dance action now to be understood as taking place on the window? If so, what have the dancers themselves become? The image of a room suggests human activity, and I therefore initially think of the dancers as representative of human beings. When I don't know where they are, I become less certain as to what they are. A tension emerges between the mimetic photograph and the abstract use of light and this affects not only my interpretation of the images themselves but of everything that is happening in relation to them.

Overall, this kind of play with visual perspective has the effect of moving the viewer conceptually around, within and between apical dimensions as if in reminder that it is we ourselves who create these. *Homages* re-stages space as an imaginary construct by continually demanding and reconstructing it. Between the concrete and the abstract we enter into a universe of contingent dimensions, where the operation of perception is in flux.



## Time

One element of the conceptual chain by which we understand space, is time. As Nemesis disrupts our sense of where we are, it also disrupts our sense of when the action is taking place. Time in Nemesis is made to slip, to circle and return. Photographs are themselves a complex combination of past and present. In capturing a moment, they allow us to constantly return to it. The content of the photographs however, project an inescapable sense of decay and abandonment, their shabby emptiness is an invitation to wonder about what human activity once occurred within them and why it has ceased to occur. Returning to the notion of inside and outside, if the dancers are perceived to be moving within the rooms, they might perhaps be understood as representing the memory of human habitation, like ghosts. The magnifications I have discussed however, suggest otherwise, that the dancers might belong to some temporally present but visually inaccessible world. Both these potential interpretations are further complicated by the transition which takes place midway through the production into a 'virtual' universe, created by the use of video projection.

Towards the end of the first section, recognisable space, as defined by the slides of rooms, is consumed by light: a flickering red and orange effect, like a fire, slowly obscures the projected photograph of a room, then changes colour to blue, like interference on a television screen. Finally, out of the electronic haze, a video image of a room emerges, much larger than any of the

previous photographs, taking up the whole of the back wall. The dancers, the live human bodies, who have disappeared from the stage, reappear within the video projection, as insubstantial traces, half transparent. These images of bodies continually dissolve and are reconstituted elsewhere in the room, sometimes over the top of another person already located at that spot. We are aware that this is filmic trickery, but the effect is to shift the production from the conventions of space-time associated with 'live' performance to those associated with recorded performance. The environment of recorded mediation is one which is in a sense spaceless and timeless, or rather where a different set of space-time rules apply. After several minutes the camera picks out a television in the bottom left corner of the room and zooms into it until everything else - the whole stage and screen, is swallowed up into a flat grey-blue flickering light. As the camera moves in on the blank, humming screen of the television, it seems that we are being carried further into the delocalised virtual location, right inside the mediated digital universe.

Out of this, the 'real' dancers re-emerge, as if born from it. The single dancer who first appears on the stage, no longer looks human. He or she wears a strange, futuristic costume, reminiscent of a kind of genderless, alien space creature. The dancer goes through a series of movements which suggest total development. The implication is that, this new, undefined, a-temporal and a-spatial universe has itself brought forth a new kind

of a-human being.

In this section, and indeed, throughout Nemesis, the disruptions to our concepts of when, and where reveal those concepts to be inextricably interactive, both between each other, and in terms of defining the what that takes place within them. As McGregor layers spatial environments over one another - the stage, the photograph, the video screen - he exposes the complexities of the temporal dimensions to which they are related. Presence dissolves into absence, and re-emerges from it, metamorphosed. If we return to McGregor's notion of 'an ecology of space', we can see that this does not suggest a secure environment, made up of interdependent but basically stable entities. Rather it is an environment where the very dimensions of our world through which we construct our experience are unstable and nomadic, continually intersecting and capable of transforming themselves through that interaction.

## The body

As with the relationship between the slides and the use of light, it is difficult to comprehend how the dance movement relates to the other elements of production. Without a consistent idea of location or timescale, my interpretation of the dance becomes fragmented, changing as the stage environment changes. The initial focus on blank rooms evokes notions of emptiness, stillness, silence, maybe loss, and I project these



notions onto the dancers as if they are themselves metaphorical projections of something about the space, representations perhaps of dejection, perhaps of a breakdown in the human relationship with the built environment. In this context, I read the occasional jerky slope and repetitions in the movement as bodily collapse or degradation.

At other points, the changes in scale I have discussed produce a different interpretation. When a room which the dancers seem to inhabit is transformed by a lighting effect it is as if we are zooming in on a tiny section of the space, which now dwarfs the dancers. They themselves seem to shrink in relation to their environment. Now those little glitches in the flow of movement seem less human, more insect-like. I begin to think of the dancers as being involved in a process of mutation, as if they are shifting between the 'real' world of the normal-scale room, and an invisible, microscopic world which has been revealed to me through a zoom lens. In a subsequent sequence, a lighting effect of a grid pattern on the stage floor has the effect of trapping or containing the movement, which I now read as more regimented, more mechanical. This connects backwards to my earlier image of insects to make me think of technological bugs, computer viruses.

The point is that the dancers are not one thing but many. As the different elements of side projection, light projection and physical movement are layered over each other, they create various strata of meaning, one laid over another like a tracing, through which other meanings can still be seen. One of the ways in which McGregor transforms dance is simply by denying us the conventional hierarchy of elements. The dance movement is not the central dominant factor, supported by the technical production elements, as it so often is. Physical presence does not win out over virtual projection. Nor do these elements explain one another. Instead they often seem to compete. Watching, I became aware of a level of annoyance that the lighting effects and video projections overwhelmed the dance, interfered with my vision of the movement, which I longed to see clearly.

My own frustration, as a spectator is the breakdown here, the line of sight which reveals to me what I have brought to the performance from outside, my pre-conceptions of an hierarchical structure 'proper' to dance.

Deleuze & Guattari urge us to seek, in analysis, the 'non-human', by which they mean, remove man from the centre of vision, do not look to comprehend all things in terms of the discourse of 'humanity'. This is extremely difficult to achieve on any consistent level. Perhaps the most we can hope for are momentary dislocations in our sense of self. With reference to McGregor's wish to work within 'a more digital aesthetic', we can see how the dancers' bodies take on the some of the qualities projected by technological means. In *Nemesis*, the dance-movement becomes technological because of its interaction with the technology of production. In the discourse of dance this is an extremely disruptive feature because, conventionally, the body has been seen as the privileged site of what is real, present, live. McGregor's digital aesthetic operates in part as a removal of agency from the body, a transformation of the body into one more part of the technological machine. We cannot help but locate our sense of our humanity within our bodies and it is this that *Nemesis* challenges.

In terms of the movement vocabulary, the production plays a kind of double game around notions of the organic and the technological, travelling between extremes of incapacity and superhuman flexibility and strength. The dancers' bodies often seem to stretch and twist themselves almost to a punishing degree but their reactions are interrupted by momentary breakdowns, glitches in the muscular technology. Sometimes, they seem extra-human, practicing levels of control and discipline which seem excessive. Sometimes that excess takes on a different feel, becomes sub-human in a way that's difficult to pin down. There is a jumpiness, a lack of flow about the movement that evokes robots or machines, but also a kind of fantastic self-concern in the way that the dancers focus in on limbs and joints.

As my visual sense is problematised, so is my physical response. This physical response to performance is an aspect of spectatorship which has been given a low priority within the discourse of critical analysis. In my experience of *Nemesis*, however, it has importance. For me, as a former dancer, this movement is actually physically uncomfortable to watch. It goes against my own corporeal, experiential understanding of dance, having little to do with flow, grace, connectedness. In the second half of the performance, this difference of the movement from conventional dance is emphasised as the dancers must work with prosthetic limbs.

In his introduction to this BBC film version of *Nemesis*, McGregor speaks of the process of the dancers learning to use these prosthetic limbs as having to learn 'a new ABC' of the body and of choreography - a different mechanics of their own bodies, a different set of possibilities for working with each other's bodies. This process of corporeal & choreographic exploration is apparent in the dance-action, in the dancers' own struggles with the prosthetic limbs, their inability to do what they are used to doing in quite the same way, the differently accented moves. Through the prosthetic limb extensions the company allow us an insight into a physical process, an effort which has been ongoing through rehearsal and into performance, as the dancers struggle to work with these additional interruptions to their normal physical control and interaction. There is a sense, alien to conventional dance discourse, of disability, yet the futuristic costumes work against this, seeming rather to suggest a kind of super-ability, something beyond-human. I thought of *Star Wars* and superheroes, and at the same time of insects, as if the dancers represented some kind of futuristic invasion of the anti-human.

The relationship of the dance to the elements of light and projection becomes ever more confusing in this second section of the production. These elements move between something abstract and geometric, which seems to fit in with the idea of a technological, mathematical universe and films.



projection which takes on more emotional resonances and thereby returns us to the human. In this sense, the video projection has cannibalised the role of the stage action, large-scale faces appear, taking over the whole of the back wall. They seem to suggest loneliness, isolation, alienation. On stage, the individual identities of the dancers have been consumed by their strange non-human costumes. Thus, human emotion is territorialized by the virtual universe, the video screen, which seems at times more present to us than the live stage action. Because of the large-scale faces on the screen, I start to wonder if the stage action actually represents what is going on inside these heads, if the insect-like creatures represent some kind of psychological breakdown.

The effect of these multiple strands of performance on my interpretative sense is one of interference, of a feedback between all the different elements and the discourses they bring into play which frustrates my ability to make them cohere into any secure meaning.

## Endings

The title of the production, *Nemesis*, locates the performance within a discourse of legend and myth. It provides the audience, from the start, with a sense of endings. *Nemesis*, the God of judgement and destruction, who visits plagues and afflictions upon humanity, *Nemesis*, the catastrophic consumption of human history. Rather than functioning as an 'explanation' of the performance though, a tool for bringing it all together to construct a final symbolic meaning, let us consider it as one more layer of potential understanding, through which other systems of comprehension emerge and dissipate, like fish coming to the surface of water. Legends are themselves something both indestructible yet always changing, over-present stories which are also capable of metamorphosis. Legends present themselves differently according to their location within culture and history. They are both real and

unreal, projections of the inexplicable formed with an intention to make sense of it. Notions of *Nemesis*, of death, are inextricably intertwined with notions of life. The one produces the other.

In this performance, the relationships between life and death, presence and absence, the visible and the invisible, the live and the virtual is one of metamorphosis. Each metaphor, each strand of interpretation leads on and transforms the others. Analysis is a desiring-machine, a complex process operating in conjunction with performance.

To conclude, let us return to our original notion of an ecology and to Atsopli's suggestion that performance can operate within this ecology as an unstable element causing us to rethink and revision and remediate the relationships that constitute our world. *Nemesis* takes three concepts central to human experience, time, space and the body, and radically destabilises them. But the production does not simply deconstruct, it does not destroy. Rather it reveals to us the busy, mobile, complex, interactive process of perception and interpretation. Ecology is interaction, revealed to us through breakdown. *Nemesis* rethinks time and space as flexible and multiple dimensions, within which simultaneous differences can be found, where the macro and microcosmic coexist and where memory, presence and imaginative projection constantly layer themselves over one another. It reworks the body: conflating the human with the non-human, the live with the virtual, the present with the absent. It has, for me, remediated the relationship between experience and representation, performance and analysis. By being to make sense, it led me into a dimension of reflection where incomprehensibility becomes the most fruitful ground.

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Other articles related to it in italics can be found at <http://www.randomdance.org/index.html>



Body Character: Melina del Mar, 1970s. Melina del Mar

# Intermediate Spaces. Theatre in between Discourse and Concourse

Joachim Garstmaier

Theatre is controversy. It is the argument that each human has with him/herself and with all other humans. And it is the quarrel between the various media that theatre assembles within itself as a multi-media institution: between the image and the spoken word for example, between space and movement. Theatre's specificity is that this argument is carried out directly and for real and in real time. It is re-doable and experiential time and time again, but it is not reproducible. The particularity of theatre is its in-between position: in between illusion and reality, in between reality and possibility, in between art and life, in between abstraction and the concrete, in between the arts. Is this in-between-ness theatre's strength or does it bear the danger of vagueness, of being limy at the borders to the everyday as well as to the other arts?

There is no high road, no broad speedway, on which the vague could be distinguished from the clear, the volatile from the stable, the understandable from the incomprehensible, and on the sides of which the remains of judged and condemned products would stay behind. The critical potential of theatre asserts itself in between all well-established places. It is the discourse in its original sense of word - from Latin *discursus*, walking back and forth. And it is *concourse*<sup>1</sup> - from Latin *concurrere*, coming together. Theatre runs back and forth in between manifold spaces occupied by symbols and images, which form the frame and material for its art. And it leads to the collapse of these spaces and assessments and thus to the break-in of the space of possibility that each individual has to decide upon him/herself. It combines reflection and action in a field of contradictions, of the clash and paradoxical, of the conflicting and the cracked. These are not places in which an assembled whole is split. They are rather in-between places that are the origin for something like *to be*, *joining*, *linking*, *weaving*. "The in-between is to be considered differently: as a rupture where nothing bursts to pieces, as a crack where nothing splits, as a pause where nothing stops, as a devotion where nothing devotes."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The German "*Konkurs*" means bankruptcy and, being conformed with its original Latin meaning of coming together, takes on a double meaning and forms a word game.

<sup>2</sup> Bernhard Waldenfels, *Topographie des Fremden* Frankfurt/14 1997.

When this in-between is deployed as a specific quality of theatre, it leads to the bankruptcy<sup>4</sup> of a certain idea about what theatre is and what it is not. Not in the sense of a confrontation that the classical avant-garde operated with just to proclaim once more the grandiose death or destruction or cut. The contemporary approaches rather deal with a de-limiting/unleashing of theatre out of its own limits. It is precisely because theatre moves within established fixations and limitations, that an experimental practice can refuse them, reveal that they are able to be shifted, and, in actions, constitute them anew. Such border incidents are test cases for theatre as an institution. They do not only violate borders, they also transform them, particularly since borders nowadays exist less as a given but rather in *act* as a permanent filtering, in- and exclusion, permeable and impermeable. Thus, theatre gets unleashed, it moulds forms of expression for its multi-medial constitution in the process of permanent transformation and shifting, theatre in argument with itself as an intermediary place, at which the drama of perception itself comes to performance.

With his piece *hdtre-tvélson*, choreographer Boris Charmatz consequently claims that theatre is such an intermediary place. Already the designation of the project as "pseudo-spectacle" introduces a dimension of blurring: who decides whether the performance takes place or just pretends it is taking place? It is a reversal of the as-if as a traditional principle of illusion in theatre as well as a reversal of the economy of performance itself. The show of just under one hour is made for only one spectator. As usual, the audience is ushered to his or her place which is, not as usual, a lying position on a suggested concert piano. The usher points to an alarm button to be pressed in case of emergency. Then the spectator is left alone. Alone and lying down, he or she looks at a television set, a black box that corresponds with the black box of theatre. Like Russian puppets, both the media spaces of theatre and of television, inclusive of their watching habits, get superimposed and interlocked, the black box unveils the blue box and vice versa. Only when space is treated as empty, even when it is not, can it be occupied with imaginations and ideas. Occupation and exchange are the operations that can be carried out in a place. The condition for this is the ability to foresee emptiness. And emptiness is the ability to be occupied, where there is no emptiness but something already and always. Emptiness doesn't exist. It is a product and constitutive of a dealing with spaces that is not warded off by existing definitions from formulating new definitions. Seen in this way, *hdtre-tvélson* is its own test image. Nothing less than live-performance itself is at disposal here. The performers try to force their way into the spectator's body which becomes the stage for the astonishing happening of others' bodily states. The spectator follows sleepily, not knowing whether the performance is a projection or reality, a live-projection from a neighbouring space, his or her own projection, imagination or the activity of the unconscious that is busy in trance. In *hdtre-tvélson*, Boris Charmatz makes the placeless-meas of every imagination or idea the topic. He shifts the focus to the virtual interface between the forms of presentation and the imagination of the onlooker, who is shifted towards the realm of dreams by adopting the lying position. The missing T in the title can be read as the missing link from here to there, that designates exactly that in-between space which is unleashed in and by the process. That which the calculation withholds is brought to light by the process. The substitution of a reality by a possibility and the realisation of this possibility by a new reality are quickly calculated and performed. One only has to close the eyes and already "sees" the possibilities. But if one sets to work, one realises that emptiness is at least as much a presupposed state as fullness. One can only empty a space by finding out that it is occupied by things that one has not foreseen at the start. The reality of emptiness, if it is not the final one, will always have to deal with those remains with which the reality of reality haunts the emptiness. One begins to fill a space and realizes how the new reality knits up with and weaves into the old one.<sup>5</sup>

No direction can tell the spectator what will happen to him or her in *hdtre-tvélson*. But it can deliver the construct within which he or she experiences both, the reality of being a spectator and the possibility of theatre. The reality of exchange receives its place that is only realized by the spectator's presence. All proceedings in this space constitute their own memories that reach back as well as anticipate, remember as well as forget.

"one manifesto less" (Jilles Deloaze)

Here too, discourse and concourse fall together: *hdtre-tvélson* involves the spectator in a back and forth movement, a process of exchange that doesn't follow a causal development but allows a conflict of simultaneity. Various options compete for their realisation. But they don't do so as a result of the perceived anymore but only as of the disposition of the perceiver. This conflict leads to the bankruptcy of the representation of theory which is currently part of a trend in the performing arts and runs the danger of rendering the self-reflective frame as an end in itself and thus self-indulgent. And it leads to the bankruptcy of the manifesto that Richard Sennett has described as a dilemma of society. We live in a permanent drift. When everything is subject to constant change, nothing can manifest itself anymore.

It is the underlying principle of movement, its ephemeral quality, which leads to dramatic changes within society's assemblage. But it also unveils theatre's seeming certainties as mere constructions. When we initiated an event revolving around ideas of "volatility" several years ago in Stockholm, our starting

<sup>4</sup> see Dirk Daecker: *Kalkül der Form*, Frankfurt/M. 1990.



point was Henn Bergson's statement: one has "to wait for the sugar to melt" in order to indicate it as sugar. Applied to theatre: if performance is seen as a lump of sugar, as a cube or a disc, it discloses itself by melting or liquidating and reveals its differences from others or mainly from itself. Only in the dissolution of its parameters can theatre reveal its innermost conventions. From this thought, a ten-day event resulted. It was realized under the title "If I never let you go" together with Mårten Spångberg in 2000. "I'll never let you go", says Rose - the protagonist in James Cameron's film Titanic - as she gently pushes away the body of her lover Jake so that his body can sink into the ocean. This refined and seemingly paradoxical moment of which the philosopher Slavoj Žižek speaks - to let go of something in order to preserve its central idea - was applied to most varied frameworks in which performance appears. The project revolved around gestures of dissolution: the moments when frameworks are transformed or dissolved and release an insight into the innermost conventions of how the body and its movement are presented and perceived. Aesthetic frames, conventions, popular and scientific labels and concepts have been put at one's disposal so that they could be reconceived. The discourse revolved around the immanent limits of each theatrical practice as well as the ones coming in from the outside. And it became the aim to drive these limits into bankruptcy! Each time one had to ask oneself anew what theatre is made of. The frame that made theatre art had to be redefined time and time again. Once one is not sure anymore about how to describe a theatre, it can take place in different places that no longer have to do with the traditional expectations of theatre. Then it finds itself again in that in-between area appropriate to its very being. The old rule is still effective and already no more. One tries to leave art by the means of art: it is the place where a limit of the calculable becomes experiential through and within the calculation.

The collisions between the practices of dance and the fine arts became instructive when the works of one medium were shown or partly developed in the context of the other. Not only because the ephemeral quality of dance collides with the object-character of the fine arts, but also because the apparatus can be opened to the demands of the excluded ones in the in-between space of the media and their practices. Those cannot be represented or described. But nonetheless it is the dissolution of the usual parameters that allows the possibility of a new interpretation.

At this point it becomes clear that the question about the vague, volatile and incomprehensible runs along a political line that Jacques Rancière has described with the term "unagreement". The situation of being excluded constitutes the very structure of the political. The "unagreement" exceeds mutual disagreement or simply not understanding each other: it describes a situation that is defined by a reciprocal misjudgement. For example, both sides use the same words but don't refer to the same object or subject matter. This happens when a social group is refused access to those institutionalised places where this group could be heard and where it could participate. The relation between the various parts of a society cannot be other than controversial. It cannot be dissolved. There is always a "share of the share-less". Politics emerges the moment when the share starts to "count itself in" and thus jeopardizes the existing distribution. Politics stops the moment when first attempts to change are absorbed and made to fit into the existing system. Politics and police fall into one, as a "happy consensusuality".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Jacques Rancière: *La Mésentente Politique et Philosophique*. Paris: 1995.

The conflict taking place in theatre as an immediate area has to be acknowledged as fundamental and irreducible. Conflicts are constitutive and unannouncable for any form of political, social and ethnic identity. Conflict is the central characteristic of the political, in other words, the impossibility of creating consensus without producing exclusion. The vague, volatile and incomprehensible only emerges in conflict, if it doesn't want to be mere aesthetics. At this point a critical attitude separates from an affirmative practice in theatre. Which can be shown rather well in the trend towards blurriness at the contemporary image heavers. Why are those pictures so popular in which almost nothing is discernible?

As a well-established aesthetic tool in photo-journalism, the but-of-focus techniques suggest sensation, drama or catastrophe. The blurry shots of the first moon landing or of alleged UFO's are paradigmatic motifs of the last century. Such pictures and others similar to them, point to events which disturb their reproduction and become present through exactly that disturbance. They correspond to a discourse that the technology of precise photographic reproduction has been provoking since around 1840. The reproach aimed at mindless superficiality often voiced by painters was answered by a row of photographers by employing the blurring effects. Ghost-photographs boomed and served the hunger for the miraculous or even for the occult. The blur-wave led to a crossover of genres, as in the photographs of the American Edward Steichen, that made Rodin's sculptures look like mere schemes. The but-of-focus techniques were considered to be appropriate means to translate sense reactions into an image as undifferentiated as possible. They become representations promising exactly those extraordinary sensual experiences they withheld.

To this day, filmmakers employ blurry sequences in order to represent flashbacks or dreams. This sign level is interrupted when for example the whirl of blurry images of the constantly moving hand held camera in Vinterberg's dogma-film *The Feast* describe not only the traumatic state of the characters but also involve the spectator in an emotional maelstrom. Another aspect was added with the movement-blur, originally an unwanted side effect of the long exposure times of the beginnings of photography. With photographs that showed blurry but detailed movement phases, Futurists such as the Italian

Antigen Allegorie idealized the nose and the mad rush of the fast means of transportation in an accelerating world

Blurry pictures have a double valence: they can be the expression of an affirmative aesthetics as well as of a critical practice. In painting or photography, they are often used in order to free from the hectic presence full of sensory inputs and to possibly evoke an idealized idyll in the eye of the onlooker. Thus, they are not far from Romantic landscape painting, which wanted to blend space, matter and time into one on the canvas, trying to enhance transcendental experiences in the onlooker. On the other side, the movement-blur is the attempt to come as close as possible to the pulsing, living presence. Between the two poles - transcendence and the search for greater realism - the mesh weaves itself.

Today, when the diverse possibility of image manipulation, a pluralism of styles, and the inflationary amount of pictures, determine the habits of visual perception, they can easily foster the ability for conflict, which bluntness used to convey, into marketable aesthetics. The recent renaissance of bluntness shows the optical glossing of a neo-liberal model for life and for society. Blurry images are multivalent and easily consumed. Thus, the arts and society assess them as highly marketable and with great use value. In advertisements, they appeal to the consumerist desires of an exclusive group of young, highly paid and aesthetically educated people. The stream of blurry, soft-focused images can be read as an "iconography of the good life"<sup>6</sup> alternative of the present day and representative of movement, success, fitness and luxury. It is self-referential, as its producers as well as its recipients belong to the privileged groups of our society, who can participate in the easy living. Those who look at a blurry image in one of the many lifestyle magazines will see themselves, consciously or not, as those who are on the right side and are able to read the signs of the times. Maybe that was the reason why Boris Groys deemed Ben Laden's videos to be more progressive aesthetically than the simple images of the cowboy George Bush.

In the flood of pictures, theatre can use its specific position in between reality and illusion for insisting on images that are more than just visual stimuli. The French film critic Serge Daney discerns the two as follows: "The visual is a closed circle, nothing more but the ecstatic verification of the functioning of the organs. The image, however, is always more and at the same time less than itself." Maybe the visual can be assigned to fantasy which freely associates, whereas the image can be classed with imagination which creates connections between reality and possibility and that lets us think the possible as a real. Each procedure bears the possibility of becoming other, of being here and of passing by. It is thus open-ended. To rest on this fact is the task of theatre, and it maybe a traditional and contemporary at the same time.

"Philosophy and theatre", says Derrida, "are connected in a turbulent and insistent affinity. Do not both experiences privilege a certain authority of presence and visibility? The authority of the gaze, the authority of the optical, the authority of the aesthetic, of the theorem, the theoretical. This privilege of theory philosophy is regularly associated with is seeing, the contemplative, the looking. From the Platonic ideas to the modern object or the objectivity, philosophy can be read as a history of visibility, the interpretation of the visible. This would be the task which philosophy shares with the arts of the visible and with a certain theatre since its beginnings."<sup>7</sup> But by what means is the usual gaze made relative and how does the production quality of perception surface to consciousness?

For Derrida, it is the recollection of the fact that seeing the visible always runs the danger of ignoring something. "But if, and the invisible has always shaped the visible, if, for example, the visibility of the visible - that which renders visible the visible thing - is not visible, a certain might falls, hollowing out mere imagination of the visible towards the infinite. Thus, one would have to leave a space to the invisible at the heart of the visible, to the non-theorizable at the heart of the theoretical, to the non-theatrical - just as in the coup de théâtre - at the heart of theatre." Apparently, Derrida pleads for not eliminating certain disturbances which, within the visible, remind us of the fact that it, the visible, is seen and thus shows something invisible. This seems all the more urgent as seeing has generally become the dominating mode of perception and the privileged sense, not only in the subsystem of the arts but also within our whole culture - a complex which also runs through many dramatic texts.

Such disturbances lie at the heart of theatre as a place of drama, of conflict and of the event which becomes effective in the interplay of its media. In the back and forth movement in between the media, the spectator is drawn into a centrifugal force that triggers complications of perception and leads to possibilities of collapse - between discourse and concourse/conspicuity. But these intermediate spaces don't unfold by themselves, they have to be performed, created, nourished, in actions that cannot be performed by anyone else.

Maybe it was Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* that shifted the drama from the content of the event to the area of self-perception of the event for the first time in dramatic literature. It is precisely Godot's non-appearance which condemns human beings to the staging of their own performance. Beckett's provocation in story-technique has become a shared value. In between two sentences the sun rises and sets, the place has become space and remains vague. Beckett plays with the intertextuality of his work, with the bluntness of his statements that get only upon through observation. He creates a threshold situation of the performed, in which each event includes banality as well as sublime traits. His inventions of images and technologies which banish the seemingly given into a personal space of

<sup>6</sup> Wolfgang Ithorn: *Die Geschichte der Unschärfe*. Berlin 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Der Akt des Optierens" (*The Act of Seeing*). Transcript of a lecture in Lille. 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Oberlander: "Analysis of disturbances." Lecture at the International Congress of Theatre Studies. Hildesheim November 2002.

decision instead of anchoring it outside, in the realm of values, of ideas, of beliefs. Beckett doesn't leave anything to his characters that they could hold on to, except for that which they produce. Space, time, biography, history in general, none of it can be established any longer: the accomplices of the habitual escape from the action. The fact that Godot doesn't come is the reason for the permanent production of the world. The characters create that which can de facto not be outside them - a state of total immanence, as it doesn't point in any way beyond itself. The work doesn't hold any other truth except the experience it offers to create of the absence with respects to the staging of presence. Maybe, the very being of the dramatisation of the perceptive process lies in the interrelation between the absence of the other and the staging of presence, the drama of seeing which first started as the dramatisation of perception until the production character of perception eventually gained such importance that there doesn't seem to be any disposition beyond perception and the "perception of perception itself has become drama".

Texts such as those of Beckett or performances such as those of Charnatz create out-of-focus areas that work like Gerhard Richter's curtain-paintings from the 1960s. With the folds of the painted fabric starting to flicker in front of the eyes, the onlooker realizes that one needs distance in order to see the curtain from up close. There is only a curtain to see, it doesn't open and it doesn't reveal anything except for an experience that we make of seeing itself. Those blurry zones in which seeing simultaneously means deciding, in which taking to sight and mistaking are next to each other. The spectator must answer to the ambiguity of the situation with a decision - the observer determines what takes place in this relation and releases a kind of dilemma in this respect, that making the choice by him/herself without ever achieving absolute certainty, except for certainty about what one is actually doing. When things are shifted into the twilight, they can be identified for the time being. "In these blurry areas perception perceives itself - the staging opens up to the experience of experience and creates moments of intense presence." Only with the production of an area of overload, impossible to handle, in which experiences are really made, can the permanent transformation of all cultural fields into marketable goods and segments of the market, of which Jeremy Rifkin speaks, be left behind.





Senior / Junior Competition 1, 2, 3



Senior / Junior 1st





It is impossible to speak of unknowledge, while we can speak of its effects.

Deleuze



# The Accursed Share: Accounting for the Open, Once Again

Bojana Cvejić



Open, indeterminate, risky, vulnerable, feeling. When I try to pronounce them in other languages, these adjectives slip back into English. They're roaming in the echoes of diverse role-voices, solo-project proposals, new rising programmers, generous self-reflexive critics or new theoretical propositions beyond performatives... all merging and vanishing at the point where both a theoretically-profiled and an anti-intellectualist attitude meet at glimpsing into the limits of language. The question isn't about what do these pronouncements mean when they terminate their speaking about a performance with the verdict "it's so open", but why they gain power of an idiolect, an international English, projected into the practices of dance, of self-evident values which could replace the obsolete terms like beautiful, functional, true. Openness, indeterminacy, risk, failure - to turn them into the predicative function of epithets demonstrates how they became disengaged from their former concepts such as aleatory, indeterminacy, actionism, happening. If in the 60s and 70s the open work (open sports) could invest the political as political procedures of effecting a divorce from the tradition of ideal intentional aesthetic object of artwork in performance,<sup>1</sup> today it is the rhetorical nuance of the words used for veiling a "how" where "open", "indeterminate", "risky", "vulnerable", "feeling" bear new bastard-aesthetic terms for what purposes?

To undo the jargon of dissonant consensus around these terms is to examine how it functions in a different political situation in which performance practices do not disrupt the institutional regime of artwork but interpolate it by discursive operations determining their interpretability. Inasmuch as they don't conform to one conceptual paradigm: the heterogeneous choice of performance-works, by Jérôme Bel (*Nom donné par l'auteur*), Xavier Le Roy (*Product of Circumstances*), Willem Splätingberg (i.e. *All At Over Over At All et al.*), Tino Sehgal (*Unstetig*), BADco (Diderot's Nephew, directed by Goran Serge Prestals), which I would like to look into here, produce the effect of veiling aboutness from stage representation. Naming what they are about explicitly involves the spectator in the theoretical atmosphere "which the eye cannot deary".<sup>2</sup> However, their political efficiency cannot be located solely within the theorized procedures of their making or the analyses constructing various readings of their discursive scores. It operates on a larger scale of reception, marking the gap between the spectator who "knows too much" and sees the works "as" displaying some kind of "aboutness", often connected with a theoretical point, and the spectator who searches for and is discouraged from seeing anything 'in' there if he persists with a purely phenomenal aesthetic interest in the object of performance. This place I claim as the positive hiatus with effects that thoroughly destabilize the economy of recep-



<sup>1</sup> By "open work" I refer to the practices in music, visual arts, dance and theatre during the 60s and 70s, which developed performance as the field of deconstructing the frame of the artwork by procedures of open form, immediately critique of authorship, as well as by politics of merging life and art - authors as performers like Cage, Stockhausen, Fluxus, the Judson Church choreographers and artists et al.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Danto reproduces the term "artworld" in relation to the constitutive role of theory in the concept of artwork. "To see something as art requires something the eye cannot deary - an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (Danto 1987, 162).





<sup>2</sup> By habitual 19th century model I point to the theme of the artwork status that performing stage arts ritualized from the fine arts practices, employing the mechanisms of representation of bourgeois subject by the patios of distance in the investigation of the sublime

<sup>3</sup> For a more elaborate analysis of the instances of choreographic operations and the affordance concept in other works by Jérôme Bel, see Kuehnlows, 2001

tion, the habitual 19th century model of representation? "Open" and "indeterminate" occur not as a relief from the failure of miscommunication. On the contrary, they unfold the condition in which the spectator cannot lean on a pre-established self-contained motivation in the work for her understanding, but has to conceive her view as a self-reflective act of attribution to performance - the same operation by which the performance itself acquired an indifferent attitude to the aesthetics of its phenomenon. If these works join both the informed "seeing-as" and the baffled "seeing-in" perspectives in the effect of openness or lack of motivation to essentialize meaning in aesthetic phenomena of performances, I will argue the aesthetic indifference takes in performance a distinguished form of materializing concepts regardless of their different significance but in regard to the economies of reception.

## States of Work in Performance

An overdetermined point of departure to look once again into performance practices which have been so extensively discussed? Perhaps it is the situation, where these performances have begun to dwell as interpretations of interpretations disclosing an ambiguous artwork status that sought for textual support, which is interesting. They do conform to all contractual obligations of the work-concept, most importantly to being retrievable in performance, and based in something constitutive beyond its contingent properties, thus indicating the stake of an ideal intentional object which allows them to be made, tethered, interpreted and owned. But at the same time, it is somehow within "what they are about" that these very notions - work, object, product, performance-instantiation, interpretability - are called into question.

*Nom donné par l'auteur* almost sets it up as a topic: Two people taking up a collection of seemingly found everyday objects and demonstrating them in seemingly arbitrary relations, the logic of which appears to be the movement of chaining operations<sup>3</sup> if one presses the vacuum cleaner against *Le Robert* dictionary, the other holding the cable at the other end of the vacuum will "split" the words from the pages of the dictionary. Things move when you move them, as simple as that. Or they are followed from any presupposed symbolical or signifying motivation as they can only objectively or appear in relations which induce their physical movement - also shifting from the presented to an indicated and absent movement to be thought, a g. reading as sucking, moving as name-giving, watching as tracing etc. - due to correspondences of inverted parallelism making the presence of every object contingent and dispensable, agreeing at variance with itself.

*I.e. All Over Over All Over* et al. (Francis Roth abbreviated as *All Over*) screens a sequence of excerpts from recent major dance works together with contracts for the purchase of copyright, shot from behind Mårten Spångberg, who was sitting "them" in the audience during their performances.



Jardine Dai Nove, 34, per l'usciolo



Andre Le Rio, 35, Product of Circumstance



Adrian Spangberg  
16, All AM Over Over All at 16

n front of the screen onstage and with his back turned to his own (now) audience, the live Mörten is dubbing the recorded Mörten as he then 'nail' spectator's behaviour. The works reproduced in video and sold as products transform into the content for the inscription of his view and thus externalize and objectify the experience of watching bracketed into the institutional protocol of spectatorship. Indeed, what was once experienced as live dance shifts into the image, and the audience is frustrated in the desire to see any dance phenomena 'in' the event which delegates their own possible watching to the fixed fictional position of another one watching, the author of this live spectacle.

Another tactic of stripping the phenomenal object of dance is, in fact, danced in (un)fixed by Tino Sehgal. The naked dancer as the author of (un)fixed performs a permanently open collection of excerpts from Isadora Duncan to Xavier Le Roy. Apart from the ritually distinguished procedures Sehgal employs in order – not simply to quote or reconstruct – but to instantiate different choreographic writings outside the frames of the works, some of which had been retrieved through the image-frame of photo-documentation, thus also pointing out to the fine-arts condition of art-work status, what shapes these propositions is an activity of differentiation. It is an operation according to which two choreographic propositions are affirmed through their difference. In permanent evaluation of the results of divergence and disjunction a positive distance of different elements is affirmed. Instantiating them side by side, the propositions are no longer identified by contrary comparison, negation, dialectical transformation which would always centralize a point of recurrence, the same to which the different is manifest. They affirm their distance as that which relates one to the other insofar as they are "different." This precisely means posing difference as a destabilizing and decentering force which shatters any notion of fixed identification of the dance object. By performing the role of performer, of one who reads, interprets and instantiates a choreography, Sehgal literally and emphatically exposes performance. Not as a transparent medium, but as an activity that is able to produce the blank page of the body inscribed with traces of erased traces, an open ground for experiencing the possibility of choreographic writing as such.

Product of Circumstances by Xavier Le Roy calls into play all the modes of productivity of the art-world disposition. Simulating the conventionality of a narrative with a hero, the story is to subject his own history of becoming a dancer to an elaboration of all the registers of artwork: from marking the autobiographical, social and cultural conditions of working to the parallel deconstruction of the body as the object of scientific research, dance instrument, dancing subject as well as a commodity in the dance-world. Thus the performance unravels as a most self-sufficient and self-referential working unit which resists separation/specialization of competences of the art-world roles (artist and critic, biographer and theorist) by performing their discursive tasks. Its

all-inclusive scope (en) met to protect or enclose out to make the concept of work and its productivity open, that is, fluctuating between the non-fixed genres of lecture, biography, theory, performance.

Self-sufficiency would also be the term to describe the mode in which Diderot's *Nephew* presents its performative production. However, in contrast to all previous cases, the attitude is not of self-reference out of self-containment, which dismantles the theatrical frame of representation by disavowing a vantage-point in interpretation. What it is 'about' or what it departs from is endlessly deferred or metonymically substituted for. Inasmuch as the event of trial and death of Socrates recurs as a topic, it is the textual regime itself, an open chain of authors (Plato, Diderot et al.) possibly worked on serve as the broken bonds of reference to reverse the causes or intentions of acts to the effects of performed events. Their singular movement, speech and gestural forms suggest intricate motivations which cannot be subsumed under one signifying regime or total context, but give way to a complex opaque material surface which engages spectator to derive her own understanding. Thus incomprehensibility between over- and under-determination of "what is performed" in performance enacts theatre that stands for a contingent parallel model of world, one which operates in itself with no claim to its origin out demanding to be looked at from multiple non-privileged positions.

## Restricted and Expanded

It is not these works, but their situation that is conspicuous. Unlike most traditional performance practices, which tend to conceal) no attempt to introduce them can fail to acknowledge that every description will be an interpretation. What could be seen as accounting for the success of muting the traditional mechanisms of reception is that the viewer is prompted to re-write or reconstitute a discourse in her own understanding that will cannibalize the phenomenon, that is, confirm a lack of confidence in the works as good aesthetic objects-essentially-in-themselves by which we always know the same thing they are about or made for and therefore, can appreciate at subliminal distance the doing of their performance beyond it. My writing 'about' them has shown that it necessarily fails in distinguishing what can be seen 'as' apart from seeing 'in' them some theoretical work.

The terms theatre and theory are comprehensible only in the relation of their chaotic inter-changeability which never works. And if a new scene (of theatre and theory) inversely involves its 'aftermath' in the plot, it is an apostrophe of misreading/misbeing in a new phase of theatre-practice as staged theory (Kushkova, 2001, 60).

But to consider the matter of "staging theory", even if the interpretive viewpoint is hypothesized from a pragmatic distance, and thus insists on the performative act of attributing a "seeing" to the work, means to come to terms

with the fact that theory pronounced as to occupy the vacancy of traditional mimetic economy of representation in performance disavows its own postulation. If the viewer feels a consequence with the work on the basis of a theoretical paradigm, like the twisted upside-down configuration of the body Le Roy demonstrates from *Self-Unfinished* quoted in *Product of Circumstances* which may be aligned with the Deleuzian concept of a body without organs, and produces it into a savor about the work (e.g. "Self-Unfinished stages (SWO)"), one is performing an injurious act of discourse, equivalent to reducing the work to a precedence of authorial intentionality which makes performance only representational with respect to its concept. Furthermore, in exploiting and assigning that which remains in a theatrical atmosphere to the work, it is forced to operate within that which it formerly escaped – a restricted economy.

To submit a work to a restricted economy, first means to satisfy the condition of sovereignty. A work has to be interpretable, constituting meaning in order to be 'about' something, a credit of affirmed sense to support the artwork status. The restriction already begins with the Danto-esque analytic assumption: nothing is an artwork without an interpretation that constitutes it as such and what is necessarily meant by this is that the form of the work is that rearranged and manipulated portion of the material that the interpretation picks out. When I say that in *All Over* the situation of the audience watching Mörten's watching is the overturn of the lack of the live phenomenon of dance into a hyperbated experience of the role of audience or if I claim that the excessive instantiation of known choreographic styles, codes, grammaticalities, mannerisms... offers Sehgal's body as the void place for the writing of any choreography, I am producing (and reducing) phenomena so as to motivate the utterance 'is' which identifies works as objects. Even if I say that what in Diderot's *Nephew* I see 'as' is tasks deliberated to fail in accomplishment in order to sustain and extend their execution to the point of producing an affect, or what I further interpret as constructions of the material 'in' performance, and also admit I am not certain about my 'reading', I contribute to the aboutness of the work. The restriction of economy of reception depends on the extent to which the interpretation claims to give the object back to the work, either with a teleological interest, searching for evidence to base it, its purposefulness, 'in' the work as its understanding, or with a teleological interest, wanting to prove the self-evidence of a concept in performance. If those works challenge the spectator in both ways, either by the immediate difficulty of understanding the work, or by restricting her desire to enjoy the remainder of unknown in interpretation, they manage to integrate the process of economicness and confront spectator with it. How much and in what way do I as a viewer naturalize my need to account for a sense, which will then provide an economicness of conservation, circulation and self-reproduction of the work? How to risk the



<sup>3</sup> The term "econominess" I borrow from Jacques Derrida ("Econometrics" *Two programs* 61-2, *Beograd*, 2001, 175-205) to define the logocentric cognitive processes in interpretation which produce work concept as the horizon of interpretable sense represented and contained in it.

<sup>4</sup> The full motto with which Danto begins his essay "Hamlet: Do you see nothing there?" *The Queen*, "Nothing at all, yet all that is I see," Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 4.

<sup>5</sup> Georges Sarraute distinguishes two opposite economic principles: a "restricted" production, which involves "action that can be completed" while not for the moment did we have to observe it within its whole – to perform a restricted action means to isolate it in part – and the "general economy" implying production beyond need, either expended or lost (Sarraute 1986, 15-45).



convention of interpretability for the status of work and still not abolish the interpretative activity?"

Let's imagine a great number of people, gathered in the hope of attending a comedia that will take place in a small arena. Although the crowd is overwhelmed by the wish to enter the arena, not all can come in: a great number has to remain outside. In the same fashion, the possibilities of life cannot be realized ad infinitum, they are limited by the space as the entry of the crowd is. The first consequence of the pressure will be to increase the number of the seats in the arena. If the security service in the arena is well organized, this number is exactly limited. However, outside, there might be trees and street lamps, from the top of which one can see the arena. If it isn't against the regulations, there will be people who will climb the trees and lamps. (Bataille 1990, 29)

This image depicts the situation where one cannot control the production of the surplus, even when it is expanded by way of defoliant means. Even if the works of Bel, Spilberg, Le Roy, Sahgal discussed earlier make the assumed internal connection of theory and practice seem explicit, while in Dolzard's Naphew the role of theory is constitutive in a tacit way, they cannot do away with the risk of incomprehensibility. The principle of the extended comedia, as Bataille uses the metaphor, means that the expenditure overrules the restricted production. In other words: if these works were to establish references to discourses that "represent" them, they would presuppose a relation with a limited reading. They apparently proceed in the opposite direction of disrupting a signifying order and placing themselves in the split between the signifier's excess: the performance which is as a phenomenon nothing but an extremely mobile empty place, its properties contingent and non-aestheticized as they are acquired through attribution rather than motivated representation, and the signified's lack, which is as well contingent a mobile object of interpretation, an occupant without a place (Deleuze 1990, 41).

I may not be informed of the body without organs as the practice critical of the humanist, logocentric body/mind dichotomies and yet what I will see or understand in the restructured non-holistic image of the body Le Roy displays, is my relation to the lack of the expected normative organismic horizon of what human body is/can produce as movement. The procedure of purchasing the choreographic works, well emphasized in *All Over*, as well as the contractual frame of audience-performance relation, will make me eschew my activity of watching not only because I am theoretically initiated to address this question, but also because I will have to account for the live dance performance removed from the place which provides a ritualized practice of producing pleasure. With no acquaintance with dance history I will be exposed to a diversity of dance languages in (Un)ited, which may even function for me on the phonic prelinguistic level and what will I see or understand? A strict analytic answer would be "I see nothing, yet all that is I see" (Danto 1967, 154<sup>9</sup>). My impossibility to

decode the history of dance still cannot silence the noise on the surface of differentiation compelling me to deal with the fact that none of the dance utterances establish themselves as points essentializing what dance is. A general economy is at work here, that which produces excesses of performance which cannot be utilized for the function of standing for something else.

Alongside a constitutive relation to theory, at the same time a non relation in performance is instituted. A point of rupture inscribed in the place where the chain of discursive knowledge which forms the theoretical atmosphere of work encounters an "unknowledge" in audience. The "Un-" prefix stands not for a negative constraint of reception but for an affirmative activity of undoing its protocol, frustrating extraction of that remainder in performance which the viewer could claim as the sense in surplus: "to go home with". No matter if the viewer in *Rom d'orné* per/au-tour grasps the logic of chastic operators, she is presented within every juxtaposition of two objects with the problem of conceiving their relation with an indefinite number of variables in which they can be associated as they are not motivated to join, participate and 'dissolve' to one meaning (e.g. a dictionary against a ball, a battery-lamp against a fan dryer etc.). The viewer has to deal with the accursed share (*la part maudite*) which is something less an undesired gift. In the lack of motivation, which is a double-coded invitation to a lack of the lack/surplus of latent (hidden) sense - e.g. "why are they putting those objects one next to the other, for it cannot only be that?" - occurs a positive absence. What might be the loss of the intended meaning in conception of the work is the gain of relation to the loss of it in performance and its reception. The spectator can't speak about an absence of meaning except by attributing it a meaning it doesn't have. The question whether the verdict "it's so open" is to be an inconclusive starting-point to activate a non-restrictive economy of reception readresses its dependency to the medium of performance. What are the procedures in performance which regulate the receptual regimes which in the viewer disable the desire and capacity to base and reduce a sense of 'aboutness' in the work?

## Performing an Equation

"Where we thought we have seized the Holy Grail, we have only caught things, and what remains in our hands is only a vessel." (Bataille 1990, 136)

The problem of securing "the vessel" - the romantic slippery sensation of elusive meaning - which will not allow the effects of openness to fall back into the myth of the gift, that is, the paradigmatic idealizations of the ineffable, unformable, inexpressible as the hidden latent surplus to account for incomprehensibility in this case - depends on performance. Devoid of interest to produce aesthetic idealistically interpretable qualities beyond what appears as the transparent *Here* doing, these works shape performance that inasmuch as it discourages a deduction of the essential, necessary

and sufficient properties of dance or theatre, it inversely offers the effect of its constructivist demystification as what the viewer will calculate as the experience of "what it looks like", the show. To attempt to describe this experience in order to test how valid a form of consciousness in description of these works could be will have to pervert their orientation and, however impossible it may seem to, attempt to exclude a theoretical working.

In *Nom donné par l'autour*, it is a man and a woman that place everyday objects and four letters (N,S,E,O) in different positions and relations.

In *All Over* (1st part) it is a man sitting in a chair in front of the screen displaying excerpts from a number of dance performances. While watching them with his back turned to the audience, he is doubling the movements of himself in the screened image.

In *Product of Circumstances*, a man is giving a lecture about his work and life. Every once in a while he announces a demonstrational example, such as "what it was, looks like this", and then performs it.

In *Unfaded*, a naked body performs an as-if continuum of dance materials interspersed with breaks arising from the diversity of movements (choreographic utterances).

In *Diderot's Nephew*, the performers come on stage, take up an act, formed in movement, speech, gesture, affect-image ambulation, in order to perform it either solo or in various combinations of each other's materials.

With increasing pragmatist and anti-interpretative drive we could force these descriptions into even more reductive specifications, which would finally lead to the formulae of analytic aesthetics: body  $\leftrightarrow$  material object  $\leftrightarrow$   $x, y$ , where  $x, y$  are tasks to be performed, rules that govern the action (Ranto 1981, 3). The analytic formulae once used to efficiently define actionism, the development of action, happening, performance art practices from the extension of the readymade by action in the 60s and 70s, now appear highly inadequate and insufficient in explaining how the reception of these performances rests on an economical model of openness. What they do remind one of, however, is that only one regime of neo-avantgarde actionism is installed in these performances today, not as a destined and in everydayness but as a tactic of task-oriented practice equivalence in the hierarchy of performance.

The actions in these performances are subverted in equivalence of consistency literal, however, by their liberality and disemulative substitution, differentiating horizontal production. They are presented by way of intentional realizations, as if the performer says "I do what happens". That means that performance does not seek for properties that could account for intent, characterizing motivation which in turn would ask for affective response from the audience. The performers present the work with the attitude of the people who level with the audience on the other side by having abandoned the modernist tendency to dis-

play a technically as an objective striving beyond, progressive or idealist to the development of performance. Furthermore, the objects are devised and performed with no stimulus for the possible discrepancy between the intended and the realized. They are targeted as transparent and not made to suggest that they stand as the reduced images in order to designate aesthetic qualities or represent objects or signify subjects. This strategy of exactness cannot be considered disemulative to interpretations of the works themselves, so heterogeneous and incongruous to form one paradigm of performance as they are, but in function of effluviating the medium of performance to revoke the surplus value of reception in a set of performative procedures, as I propose here.

**Demonstration.** Actions are presented as instances of demonstrating proof or evidence (a series of operations with objects displaying their functions and possible relations, *Nom donné par l'autour*) or unfolding a protocol (the artwork created between the audience and the performance, *All Over*).

**Exemplification.** The lecture on biography is announced. Every instance of empirical reality to which La Roy refers (scientific experiment, body reconfigurations, dance techniques and formation etc.) is either performed or specified for in the act of giving an example. Examples appear as tokens for the irretrievable but specifiable instances of experience.

**Instantiation.** Sehgal's performance instantiates what could be the tokens from 20th-century dance history. Whether we recognize them or not, as they aren't intentionally indexed as citations, we are invited to observe possible instances of choreography.

**Objectification.** In *Diderot's Nephew* each performer starts from performing a complex of movement, dance, speech, gestural material which blurs the priority of cause or effect in mounting affective behaviour. Every action appears as the objectified activity of the images of affected states.

How far does this somewhat didactic scheme, which cannot account for reception as such, assemble these works by claiming some sound support in a model of syntax in performance? If it is a model for formal specification of utterances, to what extent does it claim not only frames of cognition but actual poetics of these works?

Only a point for the problematic to be deconstructed: the distinction of the "how what" relationship in these performances is problematized, in such a way that to determine what is performed can't be deduced without considering one's own disposition as a spectator. Therefore, no opportunity to reduce the interest to appreciating the qualities of execution, if the spectator is pre-occupied with the question, "at how much I look is conditioned by how I am looked at". For this question arises, and here it is the point of taking a step towards defining a common ground for what is specific in how these works are performed, by an ideal of flatness and eff-

ceacy established in performance. Whether it is a strategy of scarcity, where a taxidological equation "one equals one" is installed - the situation demonstrating the watching of the watching in *All Over* or the regime of notation turning to examples for embodiment in *Product of Circumstances* - or, it is a tactic of overproduction where a function exhausts exploring its variables or combinatorial operations like exhausting the types of logical correspondences of inverted parallelism of objects in *Nom donné par l'autour* or diversity of compositional techniques which shift and span the possibilities of conceiving temporary "plots" of performance in *Diderot's Nephew*, or Sehgal's oratorical procedures which result in producing an abundance of material by eradicating differentiation as such, priority is given to the dimension of equivalence in performing.

This is not to advocate an essentialist stance for flattening these works to the same surface effects in performance, but to observe an orientation which postulates the medium of performance as irreducible, and apart from executing a service to work-concept, a service of containing and delivering an object of essential constitution. Thus the schematism of logical operations I have used to specify different types of flatness in performance isn't one of paradigmatic self-regulation for these works. It is valid only in demonstrating something of a discipline of forging ways these works disclaim the eternal return of the same good purpose, that the work should be beyond all its determinations universally communicable by providing a surplus share or hidden sense addressing the human. These performance practices introduce an accursed share, that by which the colloquial exclamation "it's so open" demands taking and considering one's position - not constitutive of the formal aesthetic phenomenon or an affective experience - learning and putting one's limits of understanding. And their performative procedures, insofar as their liberality regulates the calls for dealing in intercalations, estrange "openness" from the Western tradition of liberal art, characterized by a type of non-exchangeable, nature-like productivity, the free play at performance. Between the spectator 'who knows too much' and whose comprehension aligns the seeing of work 'as' the doing of theory, on the one side, and the spectator whose lack of understanding stems from not being motivated to see anything contained 'in' and thus 'beyond' the performance, on the other, it is not the antagonistic discrimination of the audience that is crucial, but the shared point where both are, the one having to test her disposition towards promise of 'more' or 'beyond' her under standing, and the other whose aestheticizing comfort is taken away to the extent of incomprehensibility, deprived of universal communicability. Tricked out to abandon the possibility to own a presupposed universal purposefulness in performance as a place where spectator can return to herself.

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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million, and the number of people aged 75 and over has increased from 4.5 million to 6.5 million (Office for National Statistics 2000). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase to 15.5 million by 2020, and the number of people aged 75 and over to 8.5 million (Office for National Statistics 2000). The increase in the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to be due to a combination of factors, including a decline in the birth rate, a decline in the death rate, and a decline in the rate of immigration (Office for National Statistics 2000). The increase in the number of people aged 75 and over is expected to be due to a combination of factors, including a decline in the birth rate, a decline in the death rate, and a decline in the rate of immigration (Office for National Statistics 2000).

The increase in the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to have a significant impact on the UK's health and social care system. The number of people aged 65 and over who are in need of health and social care services is expected to increase from 1.5 million in 1990 to 2.5 million in 2020 (Office for National Statistics 2000). This increase is expected to be due to a combination of factors, including a decline in the birth rate, a decline in the death rate, and a decline in the rate of immigration (Office for National Statistics 2000).

The increase in the number of people aged 75 and over is expected to have a significant impact on the UK's health and social care system. The number of people aged 75 and over who are in need of health and social care services is expected to increase from 0.5 million in 1990 to 1.5 million in 2020 (Office for National Statistics 2000). This increase is expected to be due to a combination of factors, including a decline in the birth rate, a decline in the death rate, and a decline in the rate of immigration (Office for National Statistics 2000). The increase in the number of people aged 75 and over is expected to have a significant impact on the UK's health and social care system. The number of people aged 75 and over who are in need of health and social care services is expected to increase from 0.5 million in 1990 to 1.5 million in 2020 (Office for National Statistics 2000). This increase is expected to be due to a combination of factors, including a decline in the birth rate, a decline in the death rate, and a decline in the rate of immigration (Office for National Statistics 2000).

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# What Must Be Excluded?

Goran Sergej Pristaš

Translated from the Croatian by Nalinda Petráš



My need to write this text comes out of the impact that a number of performances, discussions and texts which constitute a new performative stratum called "Think Performance" have had on me. The question which I'd like to mark here, while also trying to position some of the problems it implicates, concerns with the fact that the stratification of "Think Performance" regulates its framework via very specific strategies of positioning: the artists who think performance, how they do it, how "Think Performance" is produced or how its identity is stabilized and its efficiency radicalized.

No doubt about it, the concept of "Think Performance" is one of the most important performing developments in the arts at the moment, and this is something that I'd like to stress in this paper; but the question is how to approach it politically and not only to be politicized by being approached by "Think Performance". In order to be more efficient I will only question some of the affects which cause the shock to the body while affirming the causes which have an effect in "shock to thought".

<sup>1</sup> A Shock to Thought ed. Brian Massumi: Routledge London and New York, 2002

The phrase of "Think Performance" outlines some tracing process in its formation; there is a common form assumed by the thought and performance or thinking and performing. Brian Massumi, reading Deleuze and Guattari, puts out that "formation cannot be accounted for if a common form is assumed, whether between content and expression or subject and system. If the world exhibits conformities or correspondences they are, precisely, produced." To make them the principle of production is to confuse the composing with the composed, the process with the product. A tracing approach overlays the product onto the process, on the assumption that they must be structurally homologous. The assumption is that you can conceptually superimpose them to bring out a common logical outline. When the procedure is followed, product and process appear as versions of each other: copies. Production coincides with reproduction. Any potential the process may have had of leading to a significantly different product is lost in the overlay of what already is.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Brian Massumi, "Introduction like a thought" in *A Shock to Thought*, ed. Brian Massumi, p. xvii, Routledge, London 2002.



<sup>3</sup> Maren Spangberg, "Something like a prisoner's non", *Falsch* 24/25, Zagreb 2002.

Passing through the layers of "Think Performance" stratum we will see that the tracing approach doesn't appear as the principle of production of some "Think Performance", but appears in its relation to one of its strategic constituents - the audience. The example I will outline here is the performance "The Show Must Go On" by Jérôme Bel in Zagreb which was followed by a kind of *jouissance* effect in the audience who celebrated the performance as if it was "the last spectacle on Earth".<sup>3</sup> The performance in which, as Maren Spangberg emphasizes, "interpretation becomes painfully visible as the foreground, the surface" produced a pleasure in coming close to a "cui-de-sac", to a dead end of representation, but also to a dead end of discussion. In the flatness of its surface the product, overlaid by the process, exhibits the power of performance. The easiness which comes out of the technique of revealing, in Heidegger's words, "Gelassenheit", "release", "the letting be" mimicked in the form of "just do it," but also "the setting free", "the presence of something that presences", "the lying before and lying ready", turns Jérôme Bel into somebody responsible, guilty and tragic, and thus into a kind of secondary cause in complete causality, but nevertheless identified enough to be a subject.

On the other hand, the performance "Self Unfinished" by Xavier Le Roy, performed in the same context, produced a kind of audience in the desire confronted with the body which projects a force, the body which is not embodied, but incarnated and, therefore, not a body anymore. In this respect an indicative commentary was made by a five year old when she asked her mother for such a toy. Entering the field of interpretation, I would just like to remark that in finding, experiencing Xavier Le Roy's body disconnected from the world and losing it in the environment, the same child asked: "Where does he live?"

It seems that the performances "The Show Must Go On" and "Self Unfinished" are two paradigmatic performances for what we call "Think Performance", being examples of its stratification and destatification.

If we ask ourselves what must be excluded from the domain of "Think Performance" for "Think Performance" itself to proceed, we'll see two lines of its materialization: one which forms the principle of intelligibility by corresponding to the other which is a domain of radical unintelligibility. One can easily see that "Think Performance" theory very often refers to what has to be excluded from the economies of discursive intelligibility for those economies to function as self-sustaining systems (I'm paraphrasing Judith Butler here). Or to quote Butler, let's put the question: "To what extent is materialization governed by the principles of intelligibility that require and institute a domain of radical unintelligibility that resists materialization altogether or that remains radically dematerialized?"<sup>4</sup>

The formation of "Think Performance" follows the path of every other previous paradigm, but in different onto-historical circumstances. While the formation of spectacular performance discipline and technique resulted in the appearance of achieved easiness in ballet performance and representation of dramatic character, "Think Performance" exhibits easiness as a result of speculative labour which creates an ideology of non-ideal performer. Everybody is performing, everybody could perform it, everybody perform - or else.<sup>5</sup> Repudiating the formation of a disciplined subject the process of becoming

<sup>4</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender That Matters*, p. 26, Routledge, New York and London, 1990.

takes two forms: objectification of the body as an entity which is a matter of testing, redundancy and finding things at face value since "we don't know what can a body do" and, more interestingly and essentially way, the incarnation of a thought which is, significantly, and I would add, wrongly, described as a dematerialization of the body, as in Xavier Le Roy's case, where we also don't know what the body can do

What is actually dematerialized, left behind, but not criticized, is obviously the spectacle and its techniques

The surface of representation is replaced by the fatness of interpretation, which is placed on the body of the performance or is replaced by the flesh, the surface of being. But what appears as a difference between those two paradigms of "Think Performance", the fatness and the "fleshiness", is the fact that the former still operates with successive correct forms and the latter destratifies them by agnominal expression<sup>6</sup>. This expression might be traced by correct forms, but still, being the atypical expression it is the one "which produces the placing-in-variance of correct forms"<sup>7</sup>, as Deleuze and Guattari would point out. It is quite clear that atypical expressions became a commodity, however we cannot simply neglect that, just because they appear unintelligible. This kind of exclusion produces oversimplification by identifying compressive shock with spectacle, by identifying expressional momentum with signs and objects whose effect coincides with their visibility. "Self Unfinished" is unfinished because of its "incorporated materialism"<sup>8</sup>. This performance is rooted in the "Think Performance" stratum: there is the changing role of the director and producer or performance management, the changing role of the audience or new employees and the changing role of the performer taking the position of audience's union representative. The performative system of theatre escalates in its efficiency

But what destratifies those layers of bodies and subjects is a refocusing of uninteresting questions like who am I, what am I, how am I produced, or how is my identity stabilized - although these aren't irrelevant questions. The more interesting question, as Elisabeth Gross puts it, is how do I act, what enables me to do this, what acts in me when I act?<sup>9</sup>

Or, to play a little rhizomatic game quoting Deleuze's quantify writing but replacing it instead with quantify performing<sup>10</sup>: "There is no difference between what a performance talks about and how it is made. Therefore, a performance also has no object as an assemblage: a performance has only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs. We will never ask what a performance means, as signified or signifier, we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit immediately, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge. A performance exists only through the outside and on the outside. A performance itself is a little machine, what is the relation (also measurable) of the performative machine to a war machine, love machine, revolutionary machine, etc. - and an abstract machine that sweeps them along? We have been criticized for overquoting performance authors. But when one performs, the only question is which other machine the performative machine can be plugged into, must be plugged into in order to work?"

## "The Show Must Go On" and the social machine

I would like to move the discussion about this performance forward by reading an author who, by creating the loss of the fourth wall, as the objectifying but also formalist principle of incorporation, solidified the distance between the performers and audience: Denis Diderot

In his study *Absorption and Theatricality: Painter and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* Michael Freed exemplifies how Diderot's idea of the unity of the scene (including subjects outside the painting) lends towards the creation of extreme fiction that is supposed to establish an impression of complete exclusion of the beholder's presence in any respect to the painting. What is inevitable is a single view point into which the beholder will subsequently insert him/herself, but the painting must not have any other intentions towards the beholder. Any presentation that intends to directly instill a contact with the beholder or acknowledge the beholder's presence in the area of the scene (or in front of the scene) ruins the integrity and unity of the painting. "A scene represented on canvas or on stage does not suppose witnesses"<sup>11</sup>. In Diderot's orbism of the expression, attention is called to the fact that this presence can often be read off in the physics of performers' or characters' expressions portrayed in the painting, while one of the most often criticized performers' manners was a grimace, a pulling of the face. Grimace, exaggeration, caricature and refinement were main problems of the tasteless painting, not because of their own character but because of "the awareness of audience, of being beheld"<sup>12</sup> that they imply. "If you lose your feeling for the difference between a man who presents himself in society and a man engaged in an action, (...) throw your brushes into the fire. You will academize all your figures, you will make them stiff and unnatural"<sup>13</sup>. The opposite of this manner is that which is naive, that which is "the thing, but the thing itself, without the least alteration"<sup>14</sup>. Because "all that is true is not naive, but all that is naive is true, but with a truth that is pluring, original and rare"<sup>15</sup>.

However, naive and truthfulness established themselves within the painting and not in relation to the outside world or the beholder. Thus Diderot attempted to separate the theatre from the spectator as much as it was possible.<sup>16</sup> But such separation was not only of illusory character. Forming the idea of

<sup>6</sup> Jan Mollerle, *Perform or Else*, Routledge, New York and London, 2001

<sup>7</sup> Brian Massumi, "Introduction like a thought" in *A Shock to Thought*, ed. Brian Massumi, p. ix

<sup>8</sup> Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 99, The Athlone Press, London 1988

<sup>9</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, ed. Heinrich Burger, Rade Kany, p. 134, Glauco Zagab, 1994

<sup>10</sup> cf. interview with Elisabeth Gross by Robert Autsch, Randa Dorn and Laura Pöhl, [http://web.gc.uny.edu/cwchfound\\_objectified/p02.htm](http://web.gc.uny.edu/cwchfound_objectified/p02.htm)

<sup>11</sup> cf. Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 4

<sup>12</sup> Michael Freed, *Absorption and Theatricality*, p. 97, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1980

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 92

<sup>14</sup> Denis Diderot, "Essais sur le peinture" in *G. Diderot*, p. 224, Kultura, Beograd 1954

<sup>15</sup> Diderot quoted from *Paradoxe des acteurs* in *Prolog*, 1900

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 101

<sup>14</sup> About the relationship of Diderot's theory of painting and theatre see the text by Roland Barthes "Diderot, Brocton, Eisenstein", in *Image - Music - Text* Fontana, London, 1977

<sup>15</sup> Bert O. States *Great reckonings in little rooms*, p. 109 University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1985

<sup>16</sup> Artaud "Theater dramatique (Pré-manifeste)" in *Œuvres complètes* 11-32 p. 1379, Melaire Hrvatska Split 1970, 1979

<sup>17</sup> States *Great reckonings in little rooms* p. 149

<sup>18</sup> Alain Badiou "This lot metakora moli" *La danse comme métaphore de la pensée*, in *Œuvres scénographiques* ed. Emil Hrinac p. 30 Maska, Lubiana

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 31

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 29

<sup>21</sup> Denis Diderot "Paradoxe sur le comédien" in *Œuvres complètes* p. 50 Kultura, Beograd 1954

<sup>22</sup> Konstantin Sergejevič Stanislavski "Rad glumca na sceni" (Pabota aktera na raduju) in *Rad glumca na sceni* p. 261 Gekade, Zagreb

<sup>23</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty "The body and the world" in *Phenomenology* ed. Milan Damjanovic p. 339 Noli, Beograd 1975

<sup>24</sup> Stanton B. Garner *Bodied Space: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, p. 30 Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London 1994

<sup>25</sup> Roland Barthes "Spectacle's Theatre" in *Critical Essays* p. 27 Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1972

the pregnant moment as a constitutive fact of a "well composed scene", Diderot also promotes its regulations, the law of energies and interests. It appears as a matter of inter-esse, of being in-between. In such a setting there is space available for a certain parallelism in perception of human beings and objects or, in other words, a thorough objectification. The scene-viewer relation becomes the object-viewer relation. In this context Diderot's orientation towards *tableau vivant* in opposition to *coup de théâtre* becomes clearer and more pragmatic.

The performance space, which is a network of relations of the space of the body and the space external to it, is determined by the action within, it is in fact the field of the action. However, Diderot's theatre is a phenomenological theatre in which, as with Artaud later, the scene becomes the site of *passage*<sup>26</sup> of ideas into objects. Everything has equal importance, but it is yet to gain that importance "as it has in dreams"<sup>27</sup> Theatre considered as a field of action and the site of passage at the starting point is a place of integration, but integration of different sources of memory, knowledge and sensations without any priorities or hierarchies. The circumstances and the characters are inseparable and characters can exist outside the performance itself only if they have similar circumstances since, as Bert O. States infers, Hamlet or hamletism cannot exist without a Claudius nor can they exist without a "certain relational equation, or closed field, between the man and the world, or between a capacity and demand"<sup>28</sup> Maybe we could put but here that Bel or the empire of belism cannot exist without Le Roy.

"The drawn up, named, inscribed event in a certain situation, in the existing, in circumstances, inscribes some before and some after", says Alain Badiou.<sup>29</sup> In that (in)time (between before and after) "the event elaborates the situation as its truth" ( ). As "the event is exactly that what remains indecisive between the execution and non-execution, an occurrence, indistinguishable from its disappearance, it is attributed to something that already exists and, as soon as this addition shows, the already-existing relates its position and governs everything. The only way to establish an event is, of course, to give it a name: to inscribe it within the already-existing under a name ( ). It is the name that decides on already-executedness."<sup>30</sup> The situation is therefore that "truth" of the event, it is its name" like "Tonight", "Let's Dance", "Private Dancer" or "The Show Must Go On"<sup>31</sup>

The conflict between different being-in-betweens is in fact an integrational conflict and in it the characters cannot be separated from the circumstances, circumstances from relations, etc. The objectivity of all integrational phenomena in the theatre is that which keeps the theatre between "a dream and the event" as Artaud would say. Not illusion understood as a bag of perception looks but illusion as integration, an impression of a different style of existence, *illusion* as *vibration* (judging) of events and as a test of reality. This specific quality is manifested in an increased openness of people towards things, but also in their enfoldedness, their inter-being. For Diderot says that the theatre is just like "the society in which everyone sacrifices some of their rights for the good of the community and for the entity."<sup>32</sup> This human trait to open the body to the world of objects or other bodies, including propositions, we shall find in the radical realism of Stanislavski who counts on "the circumstances" that revive "self-awareness in part on the stage,"<sup>33</sup> as well as in the works of lower potential of theatricality in which the performer's body gives extension to the fatness of signs authorized by, for example, Jérôme Bel or produced under authority of accident. From Diderot and Stanislavski through Artaud and the modernists till today the issue is always a different degree of the performer's sensibility towards the circumstances, towards the world of objects.

What are the predispositions, what is that something that allows the body to embrace the world of objects? In the first place let us turn to Merleau-Ponty's theory that body is not an object.<sup>34</sup> But the body is also never identical to the subject. "The body I touch never coincides with the body that touches ( ). As a corollary to this non-coincidence, perception is also characterized by a presubjective level of involvement with the world of things, an entanglement with the "nonself" that subjectively presupposes and on which it is contingent.<sup>35</sup> The body is what we share with the world, but it is also that by means of which we are buried into it. We must not forget that the body never becomes completely factious, never a total object, as Barthes already demonstrated. The body will be decomposed and put together again in a new, artificial body. "Artificial, but not factitious" continues Barthes.<sup>36</sup> This artificiality is different from the one we find in scenery or furniture. Its corporeality is accentuated, accentuated is even its disposal on things, and so is its co-extensiveness with the world, with the curtain on the stage, but it is separated from the world by that otherness of production of theatre, the otherness coming but of the attempt of understanding the body and its control. The body enters the physicality mechanism, but also the "incorporeal materialism," which I shall come back a bit later. Such body is ready to enter the picture, to be reassembled, and the theatre is exactly the taking place of different techniques of body accoutment and the technology of incorporeality.

Talking about how this inter-materiality of theatre, that existence between the two worlds, the existence between objects and ideas would actually be an existence in the world of signs is equally blasphemous as is the reduction of dreams to the world of realized signs and symbols, giving up the dreamer's right to a "real" experience and being embraced by a dream. Our experientialness in dreams and in the theatre cannot be reduced by any other interpretation, although the interpretation is included in their very existence, like in "The Show Must Go On". That is why we ask ourselves whether the theatre is only a medium even for the faintest of signs?

## "Self Unfinished" and the religious machine

In a very inspiring account of Pasolini and Saint Paul, Michael Hardt points out that "Abandonment to the flesh is a form of freedom. Exposed, the passions of the flesh are released from any normative structures or organic functioning."<sup>20</sup> Here, as in the performance "Self Unfinished", the term body seems insufficient. The construct as a body is far too detached from other things and bodies, too implicated in coupling with consciousness, but it is also partaking of a sacrifice. It is being affected and suffering said passions, because any embodiment is a construct of the unification of inorganic mind with matter. Conversely, the incarnation is all about abandonment - abandonment and emptying to the flesh. In "Self Unfinished" we are witnessing the fullness of the surface of being, affirmation of the plenitude of the material, the incarnation. But that material is evident in a compression shock. The flesh becomes the flesh of Nietzsche's lightning. Here, thought strikes like the lightning, it is felt: "The highest operation of thought", according to Massumi, "is not to choose, but to harbour and convey that felt force, re-energized."<sup>21</sup> The thinking is not contained in the designations, manifestations and significations - these are only the pale reflections of flesh. "The thinking is all along the line. It is the process: its own event."<sup>22</sup> To conclude: the freedom which "Self Unfinished" offers is in the ability to create a problem, a problem of the nonobjectified body, but flesh in desire, flesh which radiates its materiality instead of materialization of signifying situation. To deconstruct "Think Performance" and to think it in its resistant forms, we have to abandon any transcendentalism in favour of the belief in the reality we live in. In search for the continuity of life and community we have to sacrifice our gift. The cynical fatness could be shaken by joyous irony. To continue in a Deleuzian way, we need reasons to believe in this world, and "becoming flesh will be our joy!"<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Michael Hardt: "Pasolini in the flesh" in *A Shock to Thought* ed. Brian Massumi, p. 62

<sup>21</sup> Brian Massumi: "Introduction like a thought" in *A Shock to Thought* ed. Brian Massumi, p. xiv

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Michael Hardt: "Pasolini in the flesh" in *A Shock to Thought* ed. Brian Massumi, p. 79



# On Strategic Interventions in Performance Art: Self-Representation of the Body

Bojana Kunst

Translated from the Slovene by Ulrike Zajer

*Exhibiting oneself is difficult for other people who don't feel good about their bodies. I could not have been more humble - but if I'd been more humble, I wouldn't have been an artist.*

(Hannah Wilke, 1985 in Jones, 1998: 151)

## INTRODUCTION

In 20th century art, performance art was often interpreted as a complex of various kinds of interventions which primarily encroached upon the borders of the artistic medium. We can say that these interventions are mainly interested in what the (artistic) medium is not, and not in what it is. Works of performance art go under various names (actions, situations, happenings, environments, and live art). Anyway - tackled by this kind of performing is not only the communication within the artistic medium, a verification and transgression of ways and possibilities of artistic activity - on which popular interpretations of performance art have often focussed. Thankful as they may be, these kinds of interpretations do not allow us to actually reveal the power of self-representation of the body, the problem of reality, vividness, potentiality, or better even, the production of the body itself. Not only does performance art shatter the borders of art this way, but reaches deeply into the way of representation. Performance art is well aware of the moment of its own potentiality - precisely with its self-representing body. The main common feature of these events is therefore a basic strategizing, which constantly generates an openness of process. We can say that performance art follows, or in its own way, actualises a basic recognition which can be found in 20th century philosophy (and is especially clearly articulated in post-structuralism). Peggy Phelan describes it as a realisation that representation "always shows more than it means" (Phelan, 1993: 27). Within this openness and volatile structure, the body has a special place: it shows as the problematic point of visibility and action which, although obsessively depicted at the time, has never had an actual representational value.

But despite it all - regardless of all the disclosure and understanding of the transgression of various regimes of visibility and power - a question remains, it tackles the tactic, arm and strategic power of these kinds of interventions, and has constantly been probed by artists themselves in their search of new articulations. The question is how to articulate the inevitably multilayered effects of such visibility of the body, and how to discuss the dark abyss into which we are pushed by every visibility. This is especially true of the female body, throughout the history of art, it has always been placed within the

ational dichotomies female / male, body / spirit, nature / culture, natural / artificial etc. Through self-representation in performance art, the female body is disclosed as the central and borderline point of subjectivity, which is far from coherent. It constantly verifies itself through ways of performing and presentation. It is never autonomous, but forever framed into the view of the Other, into the specific structure of visibility and interventions of the Other. For female bodies, which are already historically placed as 'different, sinful, ruptured, this project has been deeply restless in its double connection' (Schneider, 1997: 184). It can easily happen that this strategy emphasizes the difference and dichotomy even more, and empties the body into a manipulative image. Performance art is thus about a certain disclosure, a body representation which shows a lot more than it means, as it is always bound to produce something (which has nothing to do with value) at the same time.

How does the provocative and direct visibility of the self-representing female body manage to escape this doubleness of the body-displaying strategy? What is revealed by self-representation of the body, and what kind of performing takes place? How does performance art (factically) produce corporeality, and disclose its dangerous connections? An insight into various articulations of the self-representing body can reveal various contents of performing the body, and the political power of these contents. I will try to present three strategic approaches of performance art, which we can observe through its main historical moments. These approaches can reveal various articulations of 'dangerous connections' in performance art, and at the same time, by discussing the visibility of the body, reveal a different understanding of corporeality. I will strictly focus upon the strategies and tactical effect of the works in question and on the way the body is produced - and not upon aesthetic categorizations and framing, which by no means capture the essentials of open and contradictory artistic interventions.

## 1. STRATEGIES OF NATURE: THE EXCESS OF THE BODY

There are ample and colourful examples of works which, in the sixties and seventies, breached the gaze of the Other (especially the male gaze) by displaying the female body. They deeply problematised the traditional belief into the image, and disclosed the authoritative and institutionalised models of visibility. I will present only one example of such performance art, which nevertheless contains typical codes to recognise this specific body strategy of nature and its functioning, and also points out its possible effect.

"In 1975, the eminent American artist Carolee Schneemann presents her performance work *Interior Scroll*. First, she tells the audience naked that she will read from her book *Cosmos*. She Was a Great Painter. She then opens the front page and throws pieces of mud upon her body

She puts herself on a table and keeps reading from the book. In doing so, she strikes various poses of an art model. She throws the book away and slowly puts a scroll of paper out of her vagina. She then reads the text written on it, taken from the feminist texts she had written for and used in her previous work." (Wart, et Jones, 2000: 215)

Schneemann herself describes the central and at the same time, borderline point of her performance art in the following way: "The vagina as a place of ecstasy ( ), a holy, ritual place ( ), a source of rendering inner knowledge." (Wart, et Jones, 2000: 215) In this artwork, we can naturally recognise many motives which appear in the feminist performance art of the sixties and seventies of the 20th century - e.g. direct criticism of modern painting, and a radical intervention into modernist ways of interpretation. The criticism of depicting (framing) the female body, which we can see in the association of Cezanne, intertwines with the criticism of self-disclosure and action painting (e.g. that of Jackson Pollock with his brush of excess, as a walk, yet still creative and autonomous extension of the body).

Such criticism, however, is continuously ruptured and rendered into an entirely different gaze. It is not only about a parody of more or less traditional ways of representation, but about establishing a different performative, or more suited in this case, 'painting action'. What we first notice about this critical stand is a different hierarchy of the body, the authority becomes invisible and transmuted into a liquid and fluid centre of the body. Produced by performance art is the basic self-image of the body, which, in the case of Carolee Schneemann, reveals as a sacred, ritual, and at the same time, markedly sexual core: the body is self-represented through an authentic, original point of (sexual) nature. In other words, what is created is a profound belief into the power of physical visibility, which, through its excessive, sexual, fluid, non-hierarchical, and diffused nature, can overturn the gaze and establish a different politics of the body, as well as the politics of the spectator's perception. The excess body of nature, shown through the display, modulation, and study of the body's limits, origins in the deep impulse of the sixties and early seventies. It can best be described in Marcuse's terms, whose liberating philosophy deeply influenced performance artists in the sixties. The strategy of rebellion has its roots 'in nature itself, in the biology of the individual, and it is on this basis that rebels will redefine the aims and strategy of political fight.' (Marcuse, 1978) This reality, now brought to actualisation, i.e. this product, is thus the very nature of this body, the visibility of embodiment par excellence. Surfacing here is a certain disclosure which was banished into invisibility throughout the history of modernity, and only sporadically burst to the surface as both horrific and extremely alluring immobility of the indistinctive and the monstrous. The history of the body tells us that it is precisely this obsessive, fluid, abject nature that has never been let into digestion. It has indeed been part of the









myth of the autonomous 'male' who is forever torn between the weakness of the body and the autonomy of creativity, but has never been actually produced

A great majority of especially female performance artists in the sixties and early seventies thus reveal self-performing as a unique intrusion of excess nature, as a utopian belief into an authentic interiorisation of the body, and the political power of its strategy. On the one side, the strategy of nature establishes itself as a violent one (Verneise's actions). On the other side, however, as an extremely manipulative strategy which includes nature into the method of physical and actors training (modernist theatre and its ritual experiments), and last but not least, as a political tactic of visibility: nature is no longer answered and controlled, but reveals itself with all its abjection, and a different representation tactic - in feminist performance art.

The difference between still autonomous 'male' interventions and feminist performance art has its roots precisely in this surplus, this production of the body, where the result of the excess of nature directly reveals itself as an embodiment. In this depiction of the body, any uttering of the word 'I' is deeply linked with the female constitution as that of the Other. To put it differently the female 'I' is always constituted as recognized in the mirror of the male I as the weak I, whose utterance of I has been taken away precisely by its constitution. The nature which reveals itself here, thus becomes extremely porous, a liquid nature of openings and fluids, a nature which provocatively returns our gaze. Here, self-representation of the body seems much more dangerous and efficient: it encroaches upon visibility and the gaze itself. The excess of nature reveals that female nature is always already the Other, and such, deeply abject. Although being a locus of authenticity, this kind of nature presents the authenticity as a refuse, or as Julia Kristeva said 'there is always a sense of danger, loss, it is a denier of territories, languages ( ), it is not respecting the borders, places and rules' (Kristeva, 1980: 12).

The surplus generated by the strategy of nature, is precisely the visibility of the body: it is the tactical, fluid, sexual and abject body, the excess body of nature, which overturns hierarchical models of performing, and is deeply intertwined with the belief into authenticity. The strategy followed by feminist performance art of the sixties and early seventies is that of obsessive self-representation of the female body, which radically overturns and erases the blurred place which the female body had throughout somatophobic modern history. Due to the utopian excess of nature, which drove the energetic and fluid articulations of the body in the sixties and seventies, the dangerous connection was always going along with liberation belief. Or to put it differently the revelation of the body was directly connected with the belief into the (political) power of the visibility of the body itself. The belief into the power of visibility - the fundamental strategy of the enthusiast-

tic, political and utopian sexes, still firmly situated in the power of the oppositional standpoint. Here, the excess of nature functioned as intervention, provocation, resistance, as questioning. Through these procedures, the subjectivity of performance artists and female artists is indeed constituted anew. But the problem is not only in the fact that every membership, also oppositional, always has its privileges, but that the dangerous connection always poses a double, if not multiple, threat. On the one side, it can overturn and reveal the gaze and intervention of the spectator (especially the gaze upon female nature, which, in this case, is present as a subversive and excessive 'whole'). On the other side, however the visibility of the body charges the body into a spectacle, every visibility of the marginality of excessive nature, regardless how excessive it might be, is primarily a spectacle and can empty the body quite quickly. When self-representing, revealing and performing, we thus always risk being perceived as a spectacle, and ending up as a powerless disclosure. Or, as Peggy Phelan somewhat humorously says in the introduction to her book: "If representational visibility equaled power, then almost-naked young white women should be running Western culture." (Phelan 1993: 10). The excess of nature, which connects itself with the power of visibility, is soon disclosed as a very problematic utopia, which only deals with the development of the media and spectacle culture, and with the use of video and photography in the performance art of the late seventies and eighties.<sup>1</sup> The body is basically disclosed as replicated and reproduced, and the visibility of the marginal is by far not as clearly connected with power and efficiency as this may initially have seemed in the utopian ways of oppositional activity.

## 2. THE STRATEGY OF POSE: THE ARTIFICIAL OF THE BODY

The spectacle, which is always invidiously at work in the visibility of the body, is slightly ironically summed up in Harold Rosenberg's comment on photography: "The photograph leads the mind to the actual world: if it is a nude, it will make one think on women, not on art." (Rosenberg, in: Jones 1998: 157). Of course, it is not about one not being allowed to think of women, but about how to turn this spectacle of female visibility, how to use it in such a way that the sexual body is revealed in it, yet not interrelated with authenticity - because its sexual nature, too, is revealed as some kind of artificial pose. The body produced by these strategies of self-representation, is one with a totally different potentiality of power. No one is more aware of that than Hannah Wilke, the artist who obsessively photographed herself through her entire life, with self-representation forming a constant in her performance art and installations: Her work in no way attempts to solve the Rosenberg's dilemma "women or art" (which can quickly be rendered as "spectacle or art"), but complicates and upgrades it even further. Wilke, we can say,

<sup>1</sup> Amelia Jones states that we could find such images, especially in Mary Kelly's *Desiring Images* / *Imaging Desire*, Wedge No. 6, 1980; Lucy Lipson from *The Center*; *Feminist Essays on Women's Art*, New York: Dutton 1976; in Jones 1996.

<sup>2</sup> It is of course not coincidental that all these works come from the sphere of photography and some from that of video (Julie Rosenbach, *Video Export* etc.). As mediums, photography and video enable the kind of obsessive repetition from the pose and articulate artificiality.

<sup>3</sup> Cindy Sherman, *Figure 18*, series *Untitled* 175 (1987).

carelessly takes to self-representation precisely because she is constantly aware of the problematic power of visibility, i.e. of the inability of making a connection between visibility and power

Who, after all, really 'is' Hannah Wilke? Her body art projects perform her *multiple* through the rhetoric of the pose: *flashing her ass, cringing, nude, against a wall with a toy gun; flaunting her exquisite torso marked with boresome cut / cook-like kisses of chewed and nestled gum, sculpting her voluptuous naked likeness in chocolate, sitting provocatively on a stool in a gallery selling herself as a 'sculpture', standing in high heels, chest exposed, in proboscian, lying naked next to her emaciated, sick, but still lively mother, posing - gorgeous, hair tousled amorously - in bed with a male lover basking in postcoital satisfaction, slapping methodically behind Duchamp's Large Glass, her pubic aligned with the bachelor's impotent love gas* (Jones, 1998: 171)

Wilke's strategy - in her own words, "how to make yourself into a work of art instead of other people making you into something you may not approve of" (Jones, 1998: 182) - leads her to endless series of artworks, with her body offered for numerous photographic, film and video portraits. If we return to Rosenberg's statement once again, Hannah Wilke is well aware that it is always about both women and art (spectacle and art), yet in a special way: in her work, womanliness is a pose and fundamentally artificial, literally produced and replicated into infinity. In case of Wilke, it is not only about self-representation in the manner of an oppositional breakthrough, in which the excess of her exuberant nature would be revealed. The continuous repetition, the almost obsessive creation of her own spectacle, which she systematically and artificially constructs, constantly renders her as a pose. "Even in my sleep I was posing" (Wilke in Jones, 1998: 190)

According to A. Jones, Wilke's work can only be "read" as an "open-ended and unreliable 'performance of femininity'. Or we can 'fix' her as quintessentially narcissistic and so not worthy of serious attention" (Jones, 1998: 171). This is precisely what feminist discussions on Wilke's work have done. In the period when Wilke photographed and displayed her beautiful and erotic female body, they mainly condemned her narcissism - in their opinion, she was doing nothing else but emptying the female body into a manipulative image. Later in her life, however, when the subject of her self-performing became her body affected by chemotherapy, the criticism turned into praise of how "active and radical" body visibility. I do not intend to venture deeper into the symptomatic character of these kinds of double readings, which reveal a subconscious moralism inherent in every criticism, however radical and subversive it may be. I am interested primarily in how to describe and capture Wilke's strategy, and in how to articulate the power and political tactics of this surplus production of the body.

At this point, we can lean on another strategy of visibility of the female body. It is quite old, and

first excited one of the sharpest observers of approaching modernity, the decadent poet Charles Baudelaire. "To celebrate the cult of images, my great, my unique, my primitive passion" (Baudelaire, 1998: *Les Fleurs du Mal*). Especially interesting is Baudelaire's fascination with the cult of prostitute, which was later excellently analysed by Walter Benjamin, and discloses a fundamental visibility of the body as a commodity. The female body of the prostitute is basically commodified, it turns into goods, a serial body, as if it were factory-made. However, it also discloses itself as constantly excessive, fluid, and full of pleasure, with its desire continuously revealed and artificially imposed at the same time. It is the body that reveals how the advent of modernity brings about a constant intertwining of the topoi of the technological and the natural, the economic and the aesthetic, the female and the male. Its fluidity, however, is not that of nature and its excessive currents, but a cold flow of goods and production, of changeability, tactics, and position taking. It is a place where love and impotence flourish at the same time. It has a nature which disguises and produces itself into infinity, and a culture which constantly deforms and decays. This flow can be viewed as a mastery of tactical transformation, fluidity, and disclosure, as an articulation of new ways of representation and those of emancipating power.

According to Mark Seltzer, "The privilege of relative disembodiment in consumption is not only life beyond the body, but primarily the aestheticization of the body, the body as an artifact" (Seltzer, 1992: 138). This is precisely what can now become one of the tactics of the new potentiality of the body. The new potentiality of the body does not necessarily represent only a one-way transition from substance to style, from things to images. It is a strategy which, in the second half of the 20th century, brings back the body and the discourse on its nature / culture. It is precisely the rise of the body as an artifact that can show the obsessive commodification and self-representation of the female body as a new positioning strategy, which can also be summoned in the expression by Rebecca Schneider - as the strategy of "exploit bodies" (Schneider 1997). This is a strategy of tactic subjectivity, through which ways of contemporary production of the body and ways of its representation, can be disclosed. The spectacle is artfully put on as a carefully chosen and opulent dress. It is also exaggerated and forced in its repetition, reduced to the empty essence of a pose - which, at the same time, represents the most radical strategy of the latter.

A similar way of posing, except that her poses are even more interrelated with contemporary commodifications of the body, can be found by the American photographer Cindy Sherman. In a series of her portraits her pose is that of attending gallery openings in various costumes. In another series, *Film-Still*, she impersonates classical images of women from popular movies. If Wilke obsessively undresses in order to pose, Sherman's obsession is that of changing her

clothes, with the pose having a similar strategic purpose by both of them. Obsessive repetition always reveals that the image of the I can only be captured through its most artificial surplus: it reveals that this phenomenon is actually its basic statement, and the principle characteristic of its self-representation.<sup>2</sup>

Neither by Wilke nor Sherman, self-representation serves the purpose of disclosing the excess of nature. What they open with their obsessive repetition of the pose, is the powerlessness of visibility of the body. Exaggerating their images, they empty them into disappearance; this disappearance, however, is not empty, but always profoundly local, and bound to the complexity of the pleasure of the body. Also in their later works, this bound returns - as a horrific helplessness of the transition between the pose and the pleasure of the body, which can never really be together towards the end of her life, Wilke displays her body affected with cancer; and, in her late works, Sherman displays her images of disgust, reducing her image to a distorted reflection on dirty sunglasses which is between disgusting, yet colourful organic waste.<sup>3</sup> What we see is the double strategy of self-performing the female body and emptying it into a manipulative image. This double strategy is conscious and radical, without a utopian belief into an oppositional replacement of strategies, into authenticity, a 'natural' point, an original excess and power of the body. Quite the contrary, the body present here is consciously artificial: its strategic power can only be displayed as that of invisibility, which at the same time, is also the power of withdrawal, loss, darkness, abyss, the in-between. The abyss reveals a constant awareness that the body in every self-representation is an emptied object, and quickly returns to the spectator as a defurred shadow. The masquerades of nakedness and disguise (in both cases, it is a *mise-en-scène*, regardless whether the skin is revealed or not), i.e. the self-representation strategies by Wilke and Sherman, talk about how strategic power is always disclosed in advance; its tactical power lies in the fact that, as soon as it is established, it is already questionable. It is precisely in this way that the tactic of invisibility might work. The basic revisions here are those of the potentiality of the body, the process of its establishment, and its open artificiality. Works by Wilke and Sherman confirm that our identities have no authentic kernel, but are primarily a 'dramatic effect' of our repeating performances (Butler, 2001). Every authenticity is already constructed, veiled, established through language, culture and networks through which the body is displayed in thousands of its artificial and repeatable images.

Considering that in this text, we are primarily interested in the tactical effect of performance art, that we try to read all these acts also as actors of strategic production of the body, which does not only echo within the sphere of art, we now have to estimate the efficiency of this tactic of the artificial. We must ask ourselves how the artificial of the body functions, and what kind of dangerous connection is revealed in this

case. How could we describe the body surplus, the elusive image or pose which flees and establishes itself through obsessive repetition? How could one capture the power of this kind of strategic production of the body, and at the same time, penetrate its dangerous connection? There is a difference at work here, and can also be disclosed as a different perception of the form of political activity: it is no longer about the former belief in intervention, in the power of visibility, which functions as an oppositional breakthrough with the visibility of nature and the excess of embodiment: it, in the sixties and early seventies, the body revealed itself primarily as an oppositional force of the margin (as a process of something which does not belong to representation and is only first brought to representation at that time), it now appears in the centre of an already established field, as produced and replicated by means of photography, film and media, and with an obsessive repetition and strategic shifting of its visibility. The tactic of artificiality functions as a pose of position, as adaptation, disguise, masquerade, exaggeration, repetition, and ceaseless movement. Here, the body shows itself as absent, and as a complex network of its numerous disguises. The pose through which the body is generated, always reveals itself as the frozen gaze in-between, as the basic presence, and at the same time, the basic negativity of the body to presence never fully lets us domesticate our gaze in the spectacle, or relax in the floating freedom of the simulacra (because this presence is always somehow partial, reproduced, exaggerated, ruptured, distant, excessively present). At the same time, it is precisely due to this negativity that we can never really pin our gaze anywhere, or search for 'something' behind it (nature, excess, authenticity) because the body incessantly migrates into the image, and generates itself in new disguises. Dealing with the work of Cindy Sherman, Peggy Phelan establishes an interesting opposition: the constant oscillation between pre-forming and per-forming – moves the body into loss, absence, void, with its power revealed only in this [artificial] invisibility. "The visible body, then, like the word, conceals rather than reveals the real of its Being" (Phelan, 2002: 65). This surplus is a fundamental artificiality of the body: although it shows as carefully chosen, and put on, it is never autonomous, but always ruptured, softened in its essence, always fundamentally human in its obsessive repetition, inter-related with the Other and his gaze.

### III. THE STRATEGY OF INVENTION: THE PROCEDURE OF THE BODY

Nevertheless, the multilayered dangerous connection renders this strategy as deeply problematic, and always makes it hit against the border of the tactic politics of invisibility. The similar objections which arose in connection with such practices in the end of the eighties, already tackle the problem, but do so from a wrong perspec-

tive and thus also draw wrong conclusions. One of the critical interventions can be found in the book by Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*, the author draws a direct connection between the contemporary cultural obsession with the body, and artistic practices. (Lasch, 1991) In their case, it should thus be about one more expression of the narcissism of contemporary culture, obsessed with self-representation. The problem of the obsession of contemporary culture with the body is mostly stated in the manner of the well-known argument: despite the daily body-related activity (i.e. all cultural and commercial regimes of its cultivation, be it traditional – hygiene and fashion, or the most recent – diet, plastic surgery, genetic modulation), and despite the feeling that we are more in contact with our bodies than ever before, the body has never been more alienated a product than today. All in all, artistic self-representation with its performing of the body should be doing nothing but participating in this intolerable and complex commercial machinery. The problem of this viewpoint is above all in its missed perspective, the base of which does not consider the tactical and political aspects of this kind of displaying. The criticism which reproaches cultural production with narcissism, and regards the display of the body primarily as a symptom of the omnipresent consumption, does not consider the fact that this relation, as far as the body is concerned, has at least two sides if not many. The arguments do not hold also because narcissism is understood in its traditional and not strategic meaning (i.e. as developed in various ways of self-representation of the body). Strategically, every narcissistic pose is already a reproduced pose and reproduction shows as the only way of correspondence – or, as says Peggy Phelan, "for a woman, every correspondence is an answer, also an initial letter" (Phelan, 1991: 65). Every pose is then a connection, we could say. The obsessive repetition of the body reveals a deep intentionality, a dark and painfully local intention. Within these practices, the body as a commodity indeed becomes an object, but it is exactly here that it can come back as an efficient strategy. This commodity reveals something surprising in the centre of its artificial core, there returns the intolerable toxicity of the body: its intentionality and sensuality leer and sympathy – like in the horrid pleasure of Baudelaire's prostitute.

Despite this [political] power of re-production of the body, where the strategic power of connection is at work, we can not ignore the fact that there is a limit to this strategy which can not be transgressed. The problem is complex and I will only indicate a few contemporary digressions, which place us before a new discussion and reflection on the potentiality of tactical activity. The strategy of invisibility – in which the body detaches itself into emptiness for us to discover it again in a spatial way – seems extremely helpless in the contemporary spectacle society of myriad images, where the pose itself has become a cultural choice. The commercial strategy has taken over this kind of digression and

<sup>4</sup> According to Phelan, the oscillation between pre-form and per-form is also the fundamental test of photography.

capture, the emptiness of the pose – and rendered it as a form of contemporary lifestyle. More even, it constantly changes and modulates it as a commercial and spectacular everyday 'permanent performance', repeating and producing it obsessively. How can the tactic tension be sustained within all this, in order for a different body to be revealed? Placed among the complex, spectacular market machinery, do marginal fluids really come to their articulatory power by employing similar strategies? Have their strategic and formal procedures not been exhausted in advance, from repetition, ruptures, exaggeration, masquerading, and actually do not achieve their immediate goal? Despite the fact that a lot of parallels can be found in those self-representation strategies which play with the elusiveness of narcissism and pose, we should not forget that this kind of strategy can be a double peril in its dangerous connection. On the one side, an insight shows how the body is constructed, how it flashes precisely in the moment of its greatest absence – which paradoxically occurs through thousands of its images, we are thus offered a chance to change and re-direct our gaze. On the other side, we can not get rid of the feeling that, also in this case, another dangerous trick might be at work, which will again empty the body into a manipulative image. As says Joan Rivers, the masquerade does not create a difference between the one who changes her clothes and the masquerade itself (Rivers, 1991). It is true that this shift can help them achieve a political effect, discussed by feminist theorists (e.g. by Mary Ann Doane and Sue Ellen Case, who deal with the political effect of hyper-femininity). However, we must pay attention to the fact that, today, the kind of masquerade is part of contemporary choice of bodies, where, considering the cultural body, we are sort of used to the possibility of choice, difference, constitution of various bodies. To put it differently: how is it possible to be or persist on the margin and actualise individual radical tactics in the world today? As the performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña observes, in the last decade, 'the blob of the mainstream has devoured the lingo and imagery of the much touted "margins"—the thornier and more sharp-edged, the better—and "performance" has literally turned it into a sexy marketing strategy and pop genre. I call this phenomenon "the mainstream boogie"' (Gómez-Peña, 2003: 22). It seems that the very potentiality of tactical activity has completely weakened in comparison to the popular spectacular and commercial strategies, so that the potentiality of self-representation can no longer be ascribed either as the exclusiveness of oppositional threat nor as the persistence of positional power. In addition, for quite some time now, this potentiality of self-representation has been classified and categorised inside the sphere of art as well, stored into the history of Western performance art and body art, and mythicised accordingly.

It would, of course, be too simple to ascribe this contemporary weakness of tactical activity to the all-encompassing centrifuge of spectacle, media,

or art market, as it has been catastrophically established by some critics of post-modern reality (e.g. Baudrillard and Virilio). It is more about having to reconsider the boundaries discussed by contemporary performance art, as well as the way these boundaries are reconstructed. Is it still possible to persevere as a negative space of culture, when, despite it all, the strategic potentiality of a different tactic has been revealed? Is it possible to re-discuss one's own space of activity? This brings us to the essential traits of the self-representation, which, despite their radical and critical stand, have often been overlooked in the history of performance art, this also happened due to their various ways of political activity, which were constantly led by a formation (dispositif) of the body – natural, artificial, or cultural. These essentials of self-representation are first brought to attention by the critics and approaches to performance art that spring from the multicultural field; they especially highlight the overlooked fields of performance art, which, till the eighties, is still somehow reserved for 'white Western nature and white pose'. Thus, performance art still does not have a direct cultural effect, despite all its tactical surpluses, it actually participates and communicates within the 'Western' art system only. It indeed moves the boundaries of Western art, but these do not become any less transparent for that reason. The mainstream performative orientation of the contemporary visibility of choice does not soften the field of performance art due to its omnipresence, it does so because its visibility of choice reveals a much deeper problem, which has been subject to artistic and theoretical discussion only over the last two decades. In other words, a reconsideration of the radical perseverance on the margin does not come up in performance art because of the omnipresent contemporary choice of bodies, but due to an urgent problematising of the choice itself – or better, the way that the choice is made in the first place. The criticisms that come from the multicultural field show that choice is not so autonomous at all, that this kind of process is deeply problematic and by far not as 'self-dependent – although – interrelated – with another' as artistic interventions would have us believe while participating in this seeming freedom of potentiality. It is not that the natural, authentic, even sexual body, into which the rituals of the sixties and seventies still believed, would entirely give way to the cultural body. And it is not that contemporary multicultural approaches of self-representation would really show that the body is always culturally inscribed, contaminated, culturally and discursively determined in advance, also when we talk about its deepest intimacy: biology, sexuality, fears, desires, pathologies, desires etc. This 'cultural fundamentalism' is no better than its 'biological' variant. It pictures the choice (and consequently the difference) as an insurmountable value, and generates an intolerable demand for transparency, which, of course, is far from the complexity that characterises the self-image of the body.

Multicultural inventions by performance artists



(Adrian Piper, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Coco Fusco, Mona Hatoum, Oleg Kuik, Vlasta Džurina, etc.) help reveal that tactics of performance art are always connected with body production, and that the latter is not nearly as innocent as it may seem. It is namely the production that has not let several 'other' bodies into the surplus, simply because the self-representation here has never existed as a choice, as a recognizable procedure. Self-representation is thus neither the excess of authentic nature nor a reproduction as a reply to the already given. As a prerequisite, self-representation requires a previous invention of an identity - and thus opens the question of authenticity and pose, nature and artificiality, in a completely other field which generates a new dialectic of (ir)reality. The body is no longer that final frontier, the more or less traumatic self-articulation that confronts the endless weight of its disclosure (which, of course, closely corresponds to the confrontation with the cultural history of the Western body as a beautiful object). First and foremost, the body becomes a material for various kinds of interventions - cultural, existential, political, technological, biological, sexual, also strictly intrinsic. Only they can reveal how dependent, manipulative and interrelated the contemporary possibility of choice really is. It is also important to realise in what way this intervention takes place outside the artistic / cultural genealogy of performance art. In this

way, it constantly shatters the artificial and consensual marginal position of performance art, assigned to it by mainstream artistic and cultural evaluation, as well as by the evaluation of the artists active in its sphere.<sup>8</sup> According to Guillermo Gómez-Peña, the only chance for performance art might be to "occupy a fictional center and push the dominant culture to its own truly undesirable margins" (Gómez-Peña, 2003: 20). In this way, the surplus not only produces the body, but the very place of performance art: authenticity and artificiality, originality and reproduction, presence and absence, action and approval, conservatism and progress, old and new, closure and openness - all at the same time.

The strategy of invention can also be observed in the performance art of the last ten years, which, with several excesses of nature, strongly reminds of the excess bodies of the soles, however, its strategic politics and tactical power are completely different. It is only at first glance that these highly diverse invention strategies (Stelarc, Oleg Kuik, Gómez-Peña, Mercal-k, Orlan, Orest Ashery, Kims O'Reilly, Ana Merdetska, Ivo Tabor etc.) agree with the frequent contemporary argument that, today, the borders of the body are moveable and unstable. If we understand them from this way, we already in advance assign them the same place that they have been attributed in the transparent contemporary cultural discourse on

the body, where radical undertakings are given a marginal function and, in a way, toned down as evidence of a certain cultural formation of the body. Quite the contrary, the plastic surgeries by Orlan, the biogenetic procedures by Symbiotica, the prophetic performance works by Stelarc, the medicine interventions by Tabor, the costumed identities by Orest Ashery, the stereotypical identities by Gómez-Peña etc., take place in the complex field of self-performing as inventions. On the one side, we can observe that the process of choice is clearly performative, theatrical, on the other side, however, it is precisely the exaggerated theatricalness that brings us back to the question of our nature. The strategy employed here is a migratory one: it does not allow us to pin our gaze to the image of the body, but forces us to constantly invent the body together with the performance artist. Nonconformity, negativity, excess on the one side, and adaptability, along with sometimes nearly desperate cliché and normativity, go hand in hand in this case. The masquerade is indeed constantly at work, yet disclosed as constant self-invention, where we can not really avoid bringing up authenticity itself.

Similarly to Carolise Schneemann, who pulled a scroll out of her vagina in order to read the text on the paper 'carnier of internal knowledge' and displayed the visible core of the natural body, Orlan, in the nineties, operates on her face, this



last unfathomable narcissistic field, in order to transform into the well-known image from the history of Western art, reading abstracts from philosophical works (preferably those of Lacan) in the process. The series of plastic operations, if we take to Deleuze's analysis of Bacon's paintings, suddenly reveals the head rather than the face. Instead of the face a structural spatial organisation which covers the head, there appears the head as an addition to the body although situated on top of the body, the head shows the body as meat. (Deleuze, 1994) The effect of this has many layers and mirrors the very complexity of the self-invention strategy. Orian's work meets with numerous criticisms from various directions, which are not interesting because of their condemnation of her radical narcissism, but precisely because of their utmost resistance to the procedure itself, the choice that she makes in order to become the Other. Interestingly, it is this problematic character of the procedure that becomes one of the main arguments against self-representation of the body, this is especially obvious by the art that connects with powerful contemporary fields of knowledge on the body - medicine, biology, technology, politics, economy. Here, we can first observe how strictly contemporary fields of invention are divided, and how impassable the borders of such parallel, yet structured powers really are. Artistic works, especially those of performance art, which constantly attempt to transgress these borders, have been able to be extremely transgressive and provocative precisely due to their use and transfer of invention, they namely do not follow either the contemporary commercial structure of choice, or the authority of power of controlling those various territories. Instead, literally with its use of the borrowed procedures, performance art encroaches upon the privilege of knowledge and ways of contemporary activity, rejecting a structured dissemination of power. Of course, these transgressions make the structure of performance very vulnerable and open, and the result unreliable and unpredictable, it often returns to us as an intolerable realisation, a witness of a nearly existential materiality, which we can not really pin to anything. This kind of invention brings us to another important feature of self-invention. The body of Orian is, of course, far from the natural one, it constantly shows itself to us as strictly chosen, transformed with well-considered commercial and medical procedures - the pose has gained a perfect apparatus, we could say. But at the same time, it always brings us back to the bloody part of its nature, showing that the self-invention procedure is not innocent at all. I am not only referring to intolerable pain and shock, but to an unbearable locality, an intensified and singular body, which is suddenly revealed amidst all these choices and procedures.

What is then the nature of the dangerous connection which reveals itself in this procedure? In a fabricated world of bodies, which seem to be available non-stop, in a world of differences, simulated truths, multiplied and parallel viewpoints,

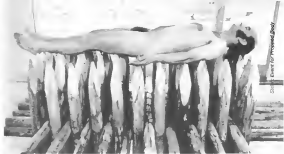
an increasingly local nature returns. It is not that self-invention strategies replace and broaden the borders of the body, they tactically confront a lot deeper problem: the time, it is nature itself that is produced, replicated, transparent and reproduced with the culture revealing itself as original, excessive, phobic and elusive. In such performance works, we can recognise a deep strategic position, which, in addition to broadening the field of the body, shows with strategic accuracy that self-invention is also an unbearably intensified, dependent field, that the (sexual) body of today is confronted with the trauma of its own articulation and sensitivity to intervention, as it increasingly succumbs to the growing commodification and grows more and more efficient under the obsessive rational imperatives and structure of self-image. It is true that strategies of the artificial open a possibility of different accumulation of the body and its differentiation because they show that the formation of the sexual body is not a product of visibility, but above all, a freely fleeing becoming. Let us not forget, however, that this artificial trick / becoming of the body also entails an unbearably sensual and local transition. After all the interventions and disclosures of the body, the visibility of today's body (sexual, female, other, marginal etc.), is not so much bound to a recognisable formation (dispositif) of the body, which brings back and re-discusses its "Western" image. Above all, it is connected with the identification of contemporary procedures of power, ways of and access to invention and choice, with the disclosure of materiality and the existential field, which always returns in this contemporary masquerade. Self-representation reveals the sexual body as a contemporary choice, but no less excessive, intensified and bloody for that reason - despite all its purity, and the seeming transparency of contemporary procedures.

## CONCLUSION

It is a fact that performance art can be connected with disclosing specific regimes of visibility, ways of performing and having of artistic practices, which are all constantly embodied by the Western way of artistic production. The question remains, however, what kind of power these kinds of interventions have today. As we know, the history of performance art is already institutionalised and categorised - far from its original, nearly romantic idea of the guerrilla and oppositional interventions from the margin. With the institutionalization of the medium of performance art (following, archiving, framing and systematic studying), and especially with the inclusion of performance art into modernist museum and contemporary curatorial projects, we can no longer talk about performance art as a sort of guerrilla. For quite some time today, it has been impossible for us to imagine that performance art would work this way - i.e. encroach upon the centre from the margin and then recede again. The contemporary situation of art production is structured and transparent: today, the centre is

<sup>2</sup> We can also include the history of performance art which is not active within the Western artistic system (Eastern European context etc.) because its strategy is unbearable, undesirable and its invention far from the strategic movements acceptable in Western ways of systematisation.





David Lauder for Proposed Body



Colin: Sausage suspension Event for Wind House



David Lauder

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well aware of the wherewithals of the guerrilla at all times - which is one of the essential traits of detecting and identification of novel and different things in today's contemporary art. The situation is not nearly as utopian as it used to be at the beginning of performance art, it actually seems deeply dystopian. It is impossible to neither persist on the margin, nor survive in the centre, whereas, then, is the place for the contemporary cultural and social potency of performance art to move and operate? As we have seen, there is another trait of contemporary culture at work, which even further complicates the situation and the discussion on political power of performance art. Considering the development of the media, and consumer culture styles in the last two decades, the power of interventions and radicality also seems to have commercialised and also disguised itself in a unique style, its yearning for reality and a special kind of media "happening", however, also provided it with its first media mirror.

There is something constantly at work in this tactical activity and can perhaps help us gain insight on the articulation of this power at the end of this text. Despite its mutation and various situations, this characteristic has actually granted performance art a specific place, which can not be captured by aesthetic or critical categories, but should be carefully detected time and time again along the traces of the situation that performance art gives rise, reacts, or relates to. Such contemporary works bring us back to the quintessential strategy, which is at work here: Performance art is well aware of its weak potentiality precisely with the production of the body itself. This kind of invention strategy forms the ethics of performing itself, over and over again. We thus come to the question of its performative politics, which is deeply interrelated with self-representation strategies. In addition of functioning both provocatively and conformably at the same time, as opposition and position, as open and closed, this politics shows performing as a procedure and an open constitution, and opens an insight into its own potentiality. In this way, performance art invents itself over and over again (as an event and a certain reality), although it frequently seems like a hard repetition. In the process of self-representation, this performative politics reveals itself to us precisely through the question of authenticity, which accompanies the beginnings of performance art, and is now returning through the use

of procedures of the body. The ethics of carrying out performance art initially rejects authenticity, but only to tactically place this important question into the very centre of the process. Only then, it is freed of its a priori constructed rubbish and sets itself as a question of potentiality. Every utterance of the I namely requires a truth, an interpretation, a stability also that of the most fabricated and elaborately chosen I. It is actually about a strategic combat which becomes extremely important in our contemporary life, where we are constantly placed before the seeming freedom of choice and invention. This combat is open and multilayered, and through the positioning of performance art, shows us the problematic character and urgency of the resistance techniques, political articulation and constant connecting with the impossible. This is why I wish my article to have an open end, and thereby conclude with a witty text written by Gómez-Peña. It excellently shows that, despite the fact that the field of performance art sometimes seems uncomfortable and helpless, it is precisely in these direct and cynical self-recognition that the power of tactical action and transgression can be revealed.

#### Question:

"Excuse me, can you define performance art?"

#### Answers:

- "A bunch of weirdos who love to get naked and scream about leftist politics." (Nipple in a bar)
- "Performance artists are - bad actors" (A "good" actor)
- "You mean, those decadent and elitist liberals who hide behind the art thing to beg for government money?" (Politician)
- "It's just - very, very cool stuff. Makes you think and shit." (My nephew)
- "Performance? It's a heightened gaze - a different sense of purpose in the handling of objects, comments and words." (Performance Artist #1)
- "Performance is both the anti-theatre of and antidote to high culture" (Performance Artist #2)
- "I'll answer you with a joke. What do you get when you mix a comedian with a performance artist? A joke that no one understands." (A friend)

# Theory for Dummies - Cremeschnitte/anthurium: nazism/nationalism

Petar Milat



CULTURE  
IS  
GARBAGE  
ADORNO

a) In Bernhard's Heldenplatz: there is one privileged signifier that denotes return, weakness and resignation. Viennese Cremeschnitte. Also a formal indication of the possibility to co-exist with nazis on one's side. A small weakness for sweets and great loathing towards Austria: idiosyncrasy of the global civil war. Cremeschnitte as an indication of salvation from the deadening stupidity and absolute lack of subtlety from the milieu. Salvation from stupidity that itself doesn't bring about anything intelligent. Idiosyncratic salvation in the remembrance of criminal exterminatory practice.

b) Problem of Croatian (non-)rational self-constitution, if we were to follow Lacan's intuition, condenses in Krišta's Flaga in one flower, anthurium. All the efforts to constitute a local, intelligible and actualized-active subject are consummated in a simple biological factum. But wasn't it already Aristotle who talked about this in *De Anima*? Reflexivity of vegetative life as a prototype of social rationality. Subject of Croatian intelligibility = funeral flower, anthurium.



The artist framed, caught in the artworld. The artist as fugitive - Escape

Artworld and theoryworld. Two truth-regimes in global space. Two games on the same playing field. Colliding or collaborating? What chance exists for a theory-art alliance, an insiders' revolt among the players - against the referees? Against the backers? Against the game itself?

Artworld. Theoryworld. Mediaworld. Inflowworld. Tounsworld. Olympicworld. Foreworld. Bushworld. Oneworld.

The artworld (anyworld) is not a place, it is an ordering system that internalizes truth, a classification procedure for making things known and pinning them down. It sets the conditions of possibility for putting the discourse of art into play. It patrols the borders, ensuring no one will enter - or leave - the discursive space unless preregistered. No exit without a re-entry visa. The rules of the game.

(Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror*, Verso, 2003, str. 84)



Je mehr sich das Kunstwerk von der Überlieferung befreit, von einem im voraus erzeugten ikonographischen und ikonologischen Rahmen, desto evidentier ist es, je evidentier es jedoch ist, desto mehr benötigt es eine Denotation, die seine Evidenz zu einem bloßen Vorwand herabwindet, zu einer Gelegenheit für eine Erklärung durch Begriffe. So spaltet sich die reine Evidenz in zwei Extreme auf, in ein Sehen, für das das Sichtbare unmittelbar intelligibel ist, und in die Suche nach dieser Intelligibilität. Diese beiden Extreme, die unendlich konvergieren und auseinanderstreifen, ereisen sich am Ende als der Evidenz überlegen. Entweder man versteht nichts, weil man alles unmittelbar versteht, oder man versteht alles ohne irgendetwas zu verstehen, weil man nichts unmittelbar versteht. (Alexander Garco Duttmann, *Philosophie der Überlieferung*, Suhrkamp, 2003)

In March 2003, Donald Rumsfeld engaged in a little bit of amateur philosophizing about the relationship between the known and the unknown: "There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. These are things we don't know we don't know." What he forgot to add was the crucial fourth term: the "unknown knowns", things we don't know that we know, which is precisely the Freudian unconscious, "the knowledge which doesn't know itself", as Lacan used to say. If Rumsfeld thinks that the main dangers in the confrontation with Iraq are the "unknown

unknowns", the threats from Saddam about which we do not even suspect what they may be, what we should reply is that the main dangers are, on the contrary, "the unknown knowns", the disavowed beliefs and suppositions we are not even aware of adhering to ourselves. The risk to be taken is to assume these fantasmatic unknowns.

(Slovo Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences*, Routledge, 2004, str. 95)



Vague, volatile, incomprehensible: neither epistemological nor ontological nor poetic question. Only political. And as such a sign of political regression. Signifier of falling for "slavery of romanticism (both subjective and objective genital)"





Eleonora Duse

# The Aura of the Actress

Lada Čale Feldman

*Theater is the order to which the stage is to be subjected, however: as theater it survives only insofar as the stage resists subjection*

Peter Brecht

When Mari Bilićević and I edited the issue of the magazine *Fotografica* on acting - acting as art, profession, authorship, object of theory, history and interpretation, but also acting as a metaphor in social sciences, a phenomenon, therefore, situated at the crossroads of mundane and artistic performances, implying intersections of various discourses - I was astonished by a certain reluctance of our contributors to address the question of sexual difference as a component which inevitably entails a crisis in any endeavor to theorize acting, to discuss it as a purely conceptual - aesthetic psychological, sociological and phenomenological - problem. The question still remains as to how to introduce a reconsideration of acting theory from the standpoint of sexual difference without simply paying tribute to this age of surveillance of our eventual political incorrections, and instead recognize in it one of the vaguest, volatile and incomprehensible motors of dampening of all the seemingly clean and neat theoretical frameworks. Let me use an example to clarify what I have in mind.

It is perhaps not surprising that a theoretician like Hans Thies Lehmann should start his overview of the history and phenomenology of acting in the same issue of *Fotografica* by stating: "The actor (and by that I henceforward mean the actress as well) has always been a medium..." (Lehmann, 2001, 7).

With an obvious awareness of - although, it seems, not a deep engagement with - feminist revisions of separate chapters of the history of acting, which have recently recovered the neglected microhistories of female performers, the author seems to have tried to retroactively correct, by this single intervention, the resistant blindness to the sexual politics implied in the fallacious neutrality reproduced over and over in the discourse surrounding the problem of the human, acting included. However, the textual realm of Lehmann's "henceforward", namely what follows his introductory statement - is a phenomenology that cannot accommodate the actress as a stringer historical supplement of the actor, being partly inapplicable to her because of the bare fact of her absence for 20 centuries of the acting history, and partly neglecting to her rather controversial presence for the five centuries left. It is nevertheless not my aim to dwell

on these well-known facts, but to demonstrate that Lehmann's attempt to de-neutralize his further neutralization testifies to the conceptual malaise anyone would have to confront along with the eventual thoughtful inclusion of the dialectics of the significant absence and problematic presence. As if the variables of sex would implicate the whole project of the phenomenology of the actor, inevitably pointing to petty details of the social, professional and conceptual status of individual acting subcultures.

Was the actress also "a valuable mass-medium" of "the text and thus of the spirit, and thus of tradition and thus of history, and thus a medium of cultural identity", the vehicle of "basic moral and political norms and dramatic conflicts of norms"? Did she "stand as example and role-model in the 17th century for rhetorical actors, in the 18th for public self-presentation as bourgeois individual"? Or did she rather occupy, even though her absence, all the facets that situated the actor in a place "outside the cultural truth-norm", "on the margin of cultural law", marking "the nonsense the unreason, the deceptive within, even the show-character of the law" and as such all that in the actor's being is "deformal to social morality within the pole" (Lehmann, 2001, 7)?

I will argue, therefore, that perhaps there is further work to be done with respect to this neglected difference, and that is the analysis of the pervasive sexualisation of the discourse on acting<sup>1</sup>, which is dependent, again, not so much on the above mentioned "bare facts" concerning the actual history of the female performers but, what is much more important, on what Pierre Bourdieu recently summarized as the overall sexualisation of cognitive and social structures according to the categories derived from the androcentric unconscious (cf. Bourdieu, 1998). Bourdieu's resistance to his privileged position made it capable of operating the objectivation of its categories what he calls the heretical labor of deplatforming assumptions tacitly relying on sexual asymmetry - is all the more productive for a revision of the theory of acting since his considerations are based on acting's crucial expressive feature, the social construction of the body, and its corollary, the corporeal construction of social reality

<sup>1</sup> Although not dealing with the historical specificity of the position of the actress, in one part his article Lehmann proves that he is sensitive to the implications of the sexualisation of the discourse on acting, although not really seeing it as his job to analyse it. "It is remarkable the meaning of the actor as body, carrying out matter, matter and matter of the word that made both him and the theater itself dubious in the eyes of the skeptical discourse", Lehmann therefore rightly suggests the following: "in parentheses however: "And (obviously a psychoanalytic) gender theoretic expert analysis could easily expose a fundamental conflict between male and female in this Hegelian rejection gesture" (Lehmann 2001, 10).

Nomely, Bourdieu focuses on the ways in which the body simultaneously supplies basic metaphors for the cognitive grasp of the world, from cosmological to social orders, and qualifies as the primary ground of their operation. Thus the sexual difference itself becomes invested with "given" anthropological and cosmological determinations that are already sexualized via the male unconscious, the male-to-female binary opposition being inserted into the framework of a value-laden series of oppositions, such as high/low, above/underneath, dry/humid, hard/soft, etc. etc. However arbitrary and deused these oppositions may appear in particular historical periods, new displacements of value-laden sexualization of social discourses and practices will continue the above-mentioned historical labor of de/heterologizing and thus naturalizing the opinions of sexual difference as a power-differential, thus ensuring the effect of the eternalization of the masculine domination, of which discourses on acting sometimes also partake, not the most important but neither the least of reasons for it being the fact that they were largely authored by men.

Instead, therefore, of once again lamenting the underprivileged social, moral and other status of the actress, this contribution suggests the re-framing of the history of ideas surrounding the phenomenon of acting with respect to the sexualization inscribed in the mental schemes through which acting is and continues to be perceived. My contention is, that we cannot simply notice and then bypass the convergence between the anti-theatrical prejudice, as Jones Barish called it, and the misogynistic outbursts of anti-theatricalists, but that we should explore their mutual enhancement: i.e. their common projection of the lack of substance on the Other of the stage and the Other of the woman, affecting both the actors, whether male or female, and women, whether actresses or not.

My argument relies on the hypothesis that "the aura of the actress" - a syntagm I construed with Benjamin's notion of "aura" in mind - cannot be completely subsumed by the psychoanalytic model proposed by Laura Mulvey (cf. Mulvey, 1975) and sometimes applied in feminist criticism of theatrical reception. Neither am I inclined, as is, for instance, Ann Dally in her study on Isadora Duncan (1992), to dismiss the binary opposition of active male spectatorship and passive female display implied in Mulvey's theory by repeating Mulvey's a-historical gesture with a counter-balanced reliance on Kristeva's semiotic realm of the "chora" as activated by the female performer engaging her in "a kind of underground communication": "a pulsing, kinetic, heterogeneous space whose meanings are much more fluid and imprecise", "an invisible and formless being which receives all things and in some mysterious way partakes of the intelligible, and is most incomprehensible" (Dally, 244-245). Following Judith Butler's suggestions that this invisible and **incomprehensible**, pre-symbolic space is also a discursive construct depending on the symbolic, and thus simply the other side of the coin of Mulvey's theory, I will argue that the "aura" of the actress is

instead a product of historical accretion of meanings and associations sedimented through time on the hot juncture of actors and spectators, women and acting, a juncture producing what Benjamin calls "dialectical images" on whose recovery an alternative philosophy of history should in his view primarily rely.

While Elin Diamond successfully appropriated his ambivalent notion of "aura" for the discussion of contemporary feminist performance as both displaying the "aura" of the living and breathing body and destroying it through the dialectical images it is showed to be always already cloaked in, the feminist critique of the individual dialectical images Benjamin used, such as those of the collector, flâneur or prostitute for that matter, pointed to their gendered character and argued against all "attempts to shortcut theory with images, tropes, chronotopes or metaphors" (Walt, 1993, 122). Yet, the very insistence on the sensual impact of the dialectical image as something invoked to disrupt the systematicity conceptually characteristic of the philosophy of history Benjamin wanted to refuse speaks in favor of an interesting reversal of gender hierarchy implied in the qualities of sensuousness and immediacy being chosen over abstract systematicity. Finally, I wonder whether our current endeavor to focus on what is vague, volatile and incomprehensible in theatre, notably in acting, could ultimately be inscribed in a long course of shifting dialectical images which proceeds by repeated, historically conditioned mistakes in naming the unnamable, the realm of the female as being projected on the stage by the male order.

The binary value system affecting the status of the actor that underpins Lehmann's overview, or any such overview for that matter, is deeply invested in the conceptual framework that institutes the semantic field of sexual difference, thus enabling a deconstructive view of the philosophy of the actor as a discourse predicated upon the very process of othering that it regulates. All the more so since acting itself defies any attempt at ontological grounding, just as the sexual difference does, producing particularities unsubsumable "under the predicate of identity" and revealing "the abyssal structure of any ontological order, whose work is to erect bridges over what is undecidable" (Feder and Zelin, 1997, 24). In this perspective, the paradox of acting joins the paradox of the "woman" in its ontological characterization as the "essentially essential".

As Frima Zefrin has demonstrated while referring primarily to Plato's writing, the pre-eminently homosexual institution of Greek theatre and the emergence of the profession of the actor, with its deployment of the actor's body, representing the body in pain, and the mimetic doubling of the self, was in fact nothing less but a controlled cultural attempt to deal with what ancient society labelled as female aspects of existence that threatened the ruling concepts of identity, rationality and self-presence. Consequently, Plato's invectives against the actor not only revolve around its despised feminine characteristics, but primarily around the horror of having to transform the male actor into the female





character, and the inevitable erasing of the degrading femininity of the actor's profession as such. The implied danger of the loss of self undergone in rituals from which the theatrical project stemmed and in which women participated, had to be suppressed, according to Lawrence Senick, by two crucial features of what he calls its "containment policy": the very banner separating actors and spectators, "protecting the audience from the Dionysian lightning-bolts" of "violence, savagery and death", and the removing of women from stage (Senick, 2001, 47).

Thus the seemingly supplementary issue of sexual difference places itself at the very core of the idea of theater, with women as literal "outside" and "other" remaining nevertheless foundational and inscribed in the system's very heart, an absence opening up a historical path of repeated displacements of the threat of the unknowable to the aura of the actress to come, and idealizing an internally split, inherently contradictory idea that will come untimely all down to the 20th century. That of actresses representing the unintelligible, critically indomitable physiognomy, and that of a woman being nothing but a mask projected by the masculine desire.

The same ineluctable bifurcation runs through philosophical writings on sexual difference, representing women either as the natural functions of an excessive body, or as the conceptual essences in the service of philosophy. The circular paradox of modern and postmodern philosophical attempts to hypostatize women beyond that bifurcation often consisted precisely in offering her stylized roles such as Nietzsche's "wench", Benjamin's "whore" or Senick's and Derrida's "actress", those seductive, resistant and inaccessible figures, incarnating the undecidable, having "the gift of destabilizing the phallic order, redoubling 'the Truth of the essential Subject'" (Feder and Zeln, 1997, 38) and, we may add, at least in Butler's writings, the essential gender itself.

However, the theory of acting did not always manage to go along with that disruptive possibility, but rather met the terms of the phallic order, founding the dignity of the profession on its, so to speak, "higher" levels, and suppressing the "lower" ones. As Edward Burns's study *Acting and Being on the Pre-modern stage* sufficiently proves, his knowledge about acting - even if Burns does not pay much attention to its gendered character - first derived its terms of reflection from the highly regulated protocols of rhetoric and ethics, from both of which realms women were completely excluded in antiquity, not being trained in the first, and being considered as "generally irrelevant" in the latter.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, the antithetical attitude from antiquity through Christianity onwards repeatedly focused on the "lower" levels of the art: the masking, the costuming, the body, but, above all, the ever-renewing necessity of female impersonation that required their compromising use.

It is with the advent of the commedia dell'arte that the contaminating aura of the actress first took its shape, both during the preparation of the

performance, the women promiscuously mixing with men during the rehearsals, and during the performance itself, with women exposing their bodies on stage, the fact that Roberto Tessari is not reluctant to call "the revolution that deformed the image that was made about what a theatrical performance is" (Tessari, 1981, 20). Designated as nothing more than bodies, as the primary inducers of libidinous desires, exerting unconceivable masculine liberties such as free speech and movement, the actresses started to incarnate the double excess with respect to the circumscribed fields of the social, sexual, but also aesthetic knowledge, threatening to contaminate the whole social fabric, and thus to break the theatrical barrier, reversing both the order of the world and the order of the stage, compromised by the collusion of mercantile aspirations, female corporeality and dangerous "naturalism" of the performance relying on improvisation. Isabella Andreani, who, both in her poems and on stage, often used a male persona, was praised by Erycius Puteanus for her act as a male element successfully taming the disorderliness of the female nature, for him, her very name, Andreani, derived from the Greek *andros*, andros, man, proved why she was so artistically gifted (cf. McNeal, 1998).

Thus the female impersonation degraded the male actor, while the male impersonation artistically raised the female performer. Acting continued to be theorized in terms of the rhetoricization of the body and was respected, as Burns shows, primarily insofar as it idealized what is mortal by representing male virtues - heroic deeds in the political and historical arena. Therefore, in both cases of transvestite conversion it offered an opportunity to subdue both the female mask and the unpredictabilities of the female flesh, continuously used as an argument of demonization of acting keeping actresses at bay both in Spain and, still longer, in England, on the grounds of critically unmarriageable "naturalism" threatening to feminize men and prevent them from going to war (cf. Hesse, 1992).

In the 18th century, the landscape of acting and the discourses surrounding it profoundly change: actresses are admitted on stage almost everywhere in Europe, Croatia offering a deplorable exception to the rule. As both Burns and Roach have demonstrated, the science of acting marks its first scientific endeavors, changing, however, the terms of discussion. Both authors explain the conceptual shift exclusively within the framework of changing class and social conditions, as well as opposing organicist and mechanistic scientific paradigms. The neglected gender polarities, as it seems, stayed firmly entrenched where they had been before, as is evident in incidental references of both authors either to the limited liberties of female characters (Burns) or to teaching subterfuges of actresses such as Susannah Cibber, known for her "sensitivity which dispeeled all art" (Roach, 1910). To a certain extent the avoidance of these authors to thoroughly discuss what sometimes seems boringly repetitive is understandable: the attacks on theatre as a dark hole, a place of feminization and corruption of the flesh, and the con-



<sup>2</sup> Here is the complete sentence: "The nature of the tragic action is such that women and slaves are called on to display qualities of ethos which are generally irrelevant" (Burns, 1990, 22).

constant designation of actresses as very "unfeminine" controllers of their sexuality (Straub, 1982, 22), whom the stage could easily dispense with, by Racine, Rousseau, and Goethe do not differ by its logic from those of their predecessors.

The terms of discussion, however, as we already said, change with the withdrawal into the realm of the salon and the parallel growing interest in human interiority, the Cartesian idea of ego and hence the unity of character the actor was to represent. The political stage controlled by God was replaced by the stage of social commerce. The medical discourses abandon the conception of the female as nothing but an extension of the male with inverted genitals – a conception that had its theatrical counterpart in the transvestite practice, with the exterior signs as the only marks of gender difference – and instead start to explore the physiological, moral, and psychological origins of the female difference. I quote from Straub: "This new model for defining gender and sexuality necessitates social institutions and ideologies that structure gender into separate, opposed spheres – hence, the sexual economy of the male spectator and the female spectacle" (ibid., 20). Indeed, the arrival of the new, bourgeois, rationalist, critical and politically invested spectatorship reversed the aristocratic paradigm, in which "being on stage, that is, being the object of the gaze was equated with the position of power" (ibid., 19), hence the claims that a new, masculinized audience replaced the spontaneities and imperfections of the effeminate passivity of the aristocratic one (Ravel, 1999, 3), but hence also a renewed idea of the actor, whether male or female, as the absolute sexual Other. Besides, the arrival of actresses permitted the establishing of the norm of gender congruence between the role and the performer, which introduced the issue of the relationship between the actor's private and public self and the question of the actor's sincerity, a discussion which Diderot's famous treatise put an end to. The anasities of the flesh were replaced by the need for the actors to suppress the voracity opposed "momentary spasms of individual sensibility" (Roach, 134) something which, again, women were said by its same Diderot to be the primary bearers of, being prone to hysteria and, paradoxically, sincere dissimulation (Colin, Piser, Venkias, 2001, 347-353).

Together with the growing interest in the private lives of actors and actresses, there appear two tendencies. The first was to explain private selves of the actresses through the roles they interpreted, and a parallel tendency, as in the aforementioned case of Susannah Cibber, to reduce the female performance to nothing but an expression of private sensibility, a thesis that has its later traces in the resistance of critics on Isadora Duncan's "antitechnical dilettantism and spontaneous outpouring of inner emotion" (Daly, 241) as it survives in one of the phenomenological modes proposed by Bert O. States, that of the "self exposes one actor", with Barab Barnhardt and Beaumont Newhall as its paradoxically opposed major analytical representatives (States, 1982P). In cases of stunning discrepancy between the private and the

fictional self in female performance, the private inclination to prostitution was emphasized as an excellent prerequisite for the illusion of "naturalness" actresses procured on stage (cf. West, 1991, 15).

The obsession with clarifying human emotions and fixing their bodily expressions as certifiable signs securing the control of social commerce permeated the scientific discourse and affected the writings on theatre. Acting presented a conceptual challenge that was to be met either through Diderot's idea of the actor's "mind controlling the outer expression of feeling" (Hodge, 1999, vi), or, as Shearer West shows in her study *The Image of the Actor* (1991), through resorting to the vocabulary of painting and sculpture in order to fix the unfixable. Although West deals again with the sexually undifferentiated "idea of the actor", Renate Möhmann (2001a) pointed to the clear sexual demarcations in the ways the painting of the period participated in this representational acting rage: portraits of the actresses distinctly prevailed, but actresses are rarely portrayed as professionals, assuming instead the poses of allegorical characters they never incarnated on stage, in the manner applied in the portraiture of the purely private selves of aristocratic ladies.

The contrastive modes of acting and sculpture particularly the ancient sculpture's "symmetry and grace", dispensing with "any trivial imperfections in the historical figure's physical appearance" (West, 122, 121) will be particularly productive in dealing with the female performance in the times to come, extending its influence throughout the 19th century and culminating in the exploration of the Pygmalion syndrome in Shaw, D'Annunzio and Pirandello. When comparing the photographs of Adelaide Ristori as Mary Stuart with the caricatures of the same performance, we can see how the immobility and permanence of sculpture was praised against the background of the freest possibility coming from the dragon-like mobility captured and reduced by the caricature (cf. Vibiano, 2000, 64-65).

The same follows from the metaphorical implications of D'Annunzio's *Godscode*: an explicit theatrical project of turning the female flesh through its petrification in the ideal of the eternal form – a sculpture or an immobile marionette, which would completely subdue the actor's body. This is an idea that joins Sartre's later comparisons of the realisation of the real in acting with the realisation of the inert matter of marble in the sculpture of Venus, this "woman made of stone" representing the ideal of being towards which the actor's art strives, the maximum of being as much as it is the "being for the Other" (Sartre, 1976, 166-170). The modernist *Atropis* can also be traced in Gordon Craig's idea of the Übermarionette, a lost origin of a usable acting practice. Having in mind that Craig dreamed about the renaissance of the all-male theatre and theatre schooling (cf. Auerbach, 1987, 14 and 315), it is only logical to read in his *Art of Theatre* how the use of the Übermarionette was compiled primarily by the Biblical lives of acting – those nonexistent,

<sup>3</sup> Here is a particularly eloquent sentence praising that effect: "They are both great actresses: not because they draw us perceptually into the imaginary but because they present the real in nearly pure form: the fictions of Magda and Phedre being a means to this end" (States, 1995, 28-29, emphasis L. & P).



expressively mythified first actress – wanting to replace this original perfect mechanism?

But let us not skip the Victorian period too swiftly, for it elaborated again the idea of female sensibility within the framework of childish regression and helplessness (Donohue, 1992), and particularly *mystifying* madness. In his *Women and Victorian Theatre* (1997) Kerry Powell writes of the discombobulated cultural pattern of madness and disease permeating even the most enthusiastic testimonials on female performance of the time, profusely thematised in the genre of theatrical novels, abounding in descriptions of actresses declining into "unrestrained emotionality, drunkenness, violence, disease, physical deformity, and finally death." The actress emerges as someone "written out of humanity", a "magnificent, dangerous animal producing the rational subjection of the audience", which remains "spellbound, white, wordless, fascinated", overcome by the "beast or monster in the guise of a woman" with "overwhelming, swaying, irresistible power", described in tropes of "electrical shock, hypnosis, even physical assault" that "mesmerizes" and "sends the intelligence to sleep" (Powell, 1997, 13–18).

We are now not only in the age of the lucrative practice of female spiritual mediums but also of Charcot's diagnostic performances of female hysteria, about to catch the plague of psychoanalysis and its discursive construction of the unconscious, a construction elaborated primarily on the bases of female narratives and – as John Breckenman puts it in his cultural critique of psychoanalysis, an outcome of Freud's refusal to "make connection between the forms of experience it theorizes and the specific institutions of modern male-dominated society" (1995, 9). The society, that is, which, according to Werninger, encourages the morally unrestrained female sexuality to adopt a *mask* of the Kantian ego, reserved primarily for males and thus inevitably broken apart in those same cases of hysteria, ultimately revealing the true nature of the woman's mystery – the lack of self (cf. Chengopoulos, 2001). No wonder that the popularity of Werninger's theses produced a growing interest in the phenomenon of the actress in the German-speaking world of the time, in the works by Julius Bab, Hermann Stumcke, Rudolf Goldschmidt, sometimes starting, as in the study by Bernhard Bauer (*Komödiantin Ömeu*?, 1927), by gynaeological inameness of female sexuality, and defining women as being more close to the stage because of the two features they share: on the one hand, the "elementary" quality, and on the other, a culturally inculcated necessity to lie (cf. Möhmann, 2001, 24).

The rediscovery of the body in the acting theories of the 20th century from Meyerhold through Grotowski to Barba, and voiced by many recent theoretical overviews, goes somewhat paradoxically well together with Craig's musings on the Übermarionette, all the various participants of the avant-garde project agreeing against female excesses of the overexaggerated sentimentality of the bourgeois psychological stage, and, in spite of their vitalist proclamations, ultimately advocating "the thorough automatization of the actor's

expressions" (Roach, 1993, 223). Lohmann rightly sees in the isolation of the disciplined body an eschymotic consequence of the progressive interiorizing, deepening and spiritualization of the thoughts on acting, proceeding with the idea "that spiritual concepts are constrained, in order to be observed, to pass through the fibrous intertwinements of matter" (Valentin, 2001, 32–33). The spiritual "bodymind" transforms the actor into the Grotowski *priest and warrior*, an image also dear to Artaud, and not necessarily disconnected from the ensuing study of the Eastern *martial arts* in order to derive from them the new principles of the actor's bodily training, without any hint that these "arts" are being reserved primarily for men. One further remark more is also due: this rediscovery of the athletic body, argues de Menna (cf. 2003), was initiated by the re-stauration of gymnastics and the modern sports at the Olympic games, and the concomitant focus on the aesthetic aspects of the human body scrutinized by recent feminist criticism as construing the idea of a woman's "beauty's masquerade" anew (cf. Lupton, 2002).

With all the rage expressed towards the tyranny of the Western logos, a turn towards Eastern traditions sidestepped the fact that these were also built on the exclusion of women – hence the unacknowledged and even masterfully denied sexual politics in Artaud's and Barba's orientalist oppositions between female and male breathing or "hard" and "soft" energies. Barba's writings are a particular case in point, having been criticized for its lack of political consciousness in studying performative cross-genderings (cf. Phelan, 1993), its insistence that the double-edged nature of energy has nothing – at least on the pre-expressive level – to do with sexual differentiation falls by its own premises, i.e. the assumption that these opposing qualities of energy can best be sensed through performer's explication of "**masculine and feminine** roles indiscriminately" (Barba, 1995, 64).

Today, of course, and surely also partly as an effect of feminist performance, myriad new practices arise, some of which insisting on the collapse between the autobiographical and the fictional in acting, on the radical viticism of acting as irreducible presence and incarnation, in sum, on "the realistic-pragmatic dimension of living actors constantly creeping into the process of aesthetic spiritualization", and celebrating, instead of denigrating, acting as "contamination" (Lehmann, 2001, 11). The stages now freely expose "the ecstatic pleasure, obscenity, perversion and danger of self-performing bodies" (Kunst, 2001, 37) putting in question the question of sexual difference, actors and actresses collaborating with children and other "figures of non-actors, icons of monstrous beings prodigious for their physical deformations: the maimed dwarf, the woman without a breast..." (Valentin, 2001, 35). The topic of our conference, it seems, goes along with these tendencies, as if wanting to touch what in the actor's intractable physicality is "cleaved of sense, far from sense" (Lehmann, 2001, 11).

On the other hand, new examples of male impersonation engage in a vertiginous revelation of

\* "The figure of the divine marionette drew less and less admirers, while the woman was demanded more and more. With the disappearance of the marionette and the growing popularity of these women which replaced it on the stage, there came the dark spirit of Chaos, and together with it the triumph of the anti-storied personality" (Craig, 1962, 149).



Hitchcock's use of the movie star icon to represent women as a film masquerade and puppet in his film *Vertigo*: the Japanese artist Yasunuma Momum is a man no longer obsessed by passing for a woman, but by passing for an actress. His series of photographic self-portraits, entitled "Descent of Actresses", display 12 images of bodies, both clothed and nude, of Vivien Leigh, Catherine Deneuve, Sylvia Kristel, Elisabeth Taylor and others (cf. Kaori Ohno, 2003), as if the man pointed to the performativity of his own body via the one projected onto the body of the actress, and joined the Butcher reversal of the biblical order of creation, wherein the universe-

ity of gender femininity is derived from the theories of **female masquerade**.

Can it then be said that the "aura" of the actress not only finally overwhelmed the field of performance, but also took the conceptual lead within the theory of acting? Or would it be a contradiction in terms, bearing in mind Demer's warning that: "the concept of the concept, along with the entire system that attends it, belongs to a prescriptive order", which "a problematic of woman and a problematic of difference, as sexual difference, should disrupt along the way" (2000, 151)?

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# Toward a Politics of the Nearly-Now - Presence and Co-presence in Performance

Heike Roms

## 1.

On a warm evening in late September 2001 a small crowd gathered at Chapter Arts Centre in the Welsh capital of Cardiff to see *Poils*, the latest work by Wales-based performance collective Pearson/Brookes. We were divided into five groups and seated in taxis that took us away from the theatre to different locations in the city, where the performers were already awaiting us. On our journey we were given a video camera and a Polaroid camera and were quickly instructed in their use. To take one picture and a video of precisely five minutes of whatever would strike us as significant at our unknown destination was all we were told. Upon arrival, in nightclubs and kebab shops, on street corners and in hotel rooms, at a police station and a railway station, we pointed our viewfinders at the social fabric of the city, trying to detect and document the intentionally theatrical among the flow of everyday performance.

Equipped with our filmic and photographic evidence, we returned to Chapter. In the black box space of the theatre long tables displayed maps and diagrams documenting the radical changes Cardiff had undergone over the past decade as a result of one of Europe's largest inner-city regeneration projects, while a soundtrack played theoretical reflections on urbanity. On four large screens around the room our video was projected alongside those of the other groups - a panopticon, from where we kept the night streets under surveillance. Gradually, from the assemblage of poorly shot videos and underexposed Polaroids, characters began to emerge, and a narrative started to form, a story of past lovers searching for each other across the city. And we realised that we had been witnessing the return of Odysseus to Ithaca: a place that he barely recognises, a place where he passes unrecognised, a place where he returns to his love.

*Poils* was conceptualized as a new kind of theatre work for the contemporary city, in which the walls of the auditorium became porous and theatrical material was constantly flowing in and out, bringing the immediacy of the street into the auditorium. The performance was devised as a multi-site event for several groups of audiences watching different situations occurring simultaneously in different locations in the city. As witnesses and recorders of these events, the spectators were figured as the actual co-creators of the work, responsible for the raw material of the show from which the multi-media assemblage was then fashioned.

*Poils* thus explored the contemporary state of the 'political' in its double association with urbanity and citizenship as rooted in the traditional notion of the 'polis'. What constitutes a 'public space' for the



From Our People (right) photo: Edwin Williams Jones

Quebec, the polis was the place where one was 'in full view' of others) in the age of CCTV surveillance cameras? (On an average day in a large British city, a person can be filmed by more than 300 cameras from up to 30 closed-circuit television networks.) Can we still think of the 'public' as a sovereign community of citizens? Pöls suggested that the contemporary city is no longer organised around a Foucauldian disciplinary distinction between inside and outside, but around the smooth circulation of traffic (of people, of goods, etc.), and that it is the control over its flow that constitutes political power today. (Apparently, one of the most subversive acts one can commit in the CCTV-controlled world of an uninterrupted flow of consumption is to stand still in a shopping mall - all cameras will zoom in on you.) The encounters that Pöls created in various public places attempted to disrupt this flow. The French Situationists were an obvious inspiration (Pearson/Brookes themselves have described Pöls as an 'account of a situationist derive') - their intention to construct 'situations' from the concrete material of the urban everyday in order to generate moments of genuine democratic participation is echoed in the dramaturgy of the performance. This was a performance conceptualized as 'polis': the public as a provisional community built from the experiences and contributions of those co-present in the unique encounters between performers, spectators and the everyday.

Yet the type of encounter that the work produced was not the intimate meeting with the 'Bare Life' (Gorgo Agamben) of the city that the Situationists envisaged. Instead, by relocating these situations from the streets into the theatre space, Pöls restaged the 'encounter' in its ambivalence as both a desire for a genuine 'life/live' exchange and as a desire to control it. As a result of this, the performance pulled apart the moment of the actual co-presence of performer and audience, and manifested it as an always already reproducible event. The spectators and performers became the lovers of the piece, on an impossible quest for a union.

## 2.

The theme of this journal issue - the invitation to consider the vague, the volatile and the incomprehensible in performance - places us directly into that theoretically least explained, yet theatrically most exploited of areas, the relationship between performers and spectators. This relationship is often figured as a 'co-presence', an encounter in the here and now which creates a certain communal energy that flows back and forth between the two parties. If Pöls goes to work on this moment in the name of the political, the performance appears to revisit the 1960s ideal of a theatrical communication that stimulates a confrontation with the audience for political effect. Indeed, Pöls is the latest performance in a long line of theatrical investigations by its director Mike Pearson, first with Welsh company Brith Gof, then with Pearson/Brookes, into the nature of communal energy as a political force. Until recently, in his work with Brith Gof, this energy was explored in relation to a concept of the 'nation'. Since its formation in 1981, Brith Gof had raised issues relating to Welsh nationhood in an increasingly complex manner. The company is best known for its large-scale, site-specific works (Goddodin 1989-1990, Pax 1991, Haeam 1992) that explored issues of communality through highly energetic physical performances within the reality of an industrial site, staging ever more challenging relationships between performers and audiences. The last of these large-scale pieces, *Phydant*, staged just before the Brith Gof's split in 1993 and regarded by the company itself as a 'failed' work, presented the final stage in the work. In its involvement of the audience and its dissolution of the theatrical it appears to present a complementary piece to the formal and political concerns of Pöls. Whilst the latter problematizes the notion of the communal, *Phydant* seemed to reinforce it in the name of the 'nation'.<sup>1</sup> Yet here too a gap opens in the very moment of the co-presence of performance and audience that puts their communality into question - a gap I would like to describe with the help of a theory that currently does not enjoy a lot of theoretical currency, that of Eugenio Barba's notion of the 'pre-expressive'.<sup>2</sup>

## 3.

Five years before Pöls, on a cold night in early March 1990, a similar crowd had met at Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff to see *Phydant* - or *The Impossibility of Britishness*, the last large-scale performance by Welsh theatre company Brith Gof under the artistic directorship of Mike Pearson, before he left to co-found Pearson/Brookes. We were invited to board a bus that took us to a warehouse in one of the faceless, euphemistically named 'industrial estates', sites for the new economies of telecommunication and information technologies that had sprung up all over Wales in places where the heavy industries of old had disappeared. At the entrance, our tickets were examined to identify those who had chosen to be a 'participant' and those who had requested to remain a 'spectator' - a choice we had to make when we bought our tickets at the organising venue. The participants among us were given a dark blue jacket to wear, the same type of garment that the performers were wearing, only with fluorescent orange shoulder panels instead of bright green ones. Then both participants and spectators gathered by the door, awaiting the event we were about to join or witness.

The warehouse was empty apart from two giant metal cubes made from scaffolding and separated by a fence which cut across the length of the warehouse, dividing the space in two. While we assembled on one side, a large doorway opposite opened and a white van entered. Subsequently all the elements that constituted the performance - performers and musicians, technicians, all equipment, building

materials, props, lighting - were brought out of the back of the vehicle and assembled in front of our eyes. While the van was being unpacked, a man made his way through the crowd declaring, 'For me, this is how it begins, with a crowd of people.' Another man appeared from behind the fence roaring, 'All men, when they come out of the hands of nature, are equal and free. No distinction ought to exist amongst the citizens but what is conducive to the general utility and happiness of society, any privilege, therefore, granted to a member of society for his own particular advantage becomes an injustice to the rest of the citizens.' Whilst this text was spoken, other performers were approaching us audience-participants with gestures of caress and embrace as if to impress the meanings of the words onto our bodies.

The first performer began to cut off his clothes with a knife, gradually exposing his flesh whilst simultaneously revealing the markings of text written all over his body. He was then binocularled, two open books were placed in his hands, and the books were set on fire. The performer began to move across the space with his arms stretched out, balancing the two burning books in his hands. Each audience-participant was then given a book and we were quickly instructed in a short action sequence, joining the other performers in running up and down the room to a throbbing soundtrack, beating the books in our hands, whilst the rest of the audience looked on.

'Pydym' is the Welsh word for Britain - and it was the creation of British national identity in the eighteenth century, which paved the way for the rise of imperialism and industrialization in the nineteenth century, and its current 'impossibility' as a viable political concept in a post-colonial, post-industrial age, which interested the company. Pydym was concerned with what Homi Bhabha calls the 'intersubjective and collective experience of nationness' (Bhabha 1994). For Bhabha, nationness (not nationalism), signifies the potential of a cultural identification 'in the name of "the nation"' that emerges in the 'interstices' between the different identities which participate in its construction. In Brith Gof's Pydym, the ideal of a British nation was scrutinized in its possibility (and impossibility) as a negotiation of the differences between its constituent cultures and languages (here those of English and Welsh). Starting from the ideals of a nationhood envisioned in the utopian writings of the 18th and 19th century by Welsh and English writers (the text cited above was taken from a eulogy by William Hodgson written in the revolutionary year of 1789), the performance staged a series of encounters where these utopian ideas of freedom and equality in the name of the nation were explored as intersubjective and collective experiences of difference between performers and audience.

#### 4.

At the time of Pydym, Brith Gof had begun to refer to Welsh identity as a fragmented, fabricated and fluid hybrid. As Pearson himself has pointed out, this notion of Welsh culture as hybridity was 'at odds with the orthodoxy of the current nationalist discourse' (Pearson 1995b: 8). The events following the break-up of Yugoslavia had a deep effect on Brith Gof's growing scepticism about essentialist identity politics, and became the focal point of the company's investigation into the complex politics of nationalism. Yet whilst the earlier works of that period (Arturus Rex cycle 1993-4) presented an often bleak picture of the politics of cultural identity, focusing on its aggressive nature, its use in political propaganda, and its role in genocide, Pydym is in effect a celebration of identity as heterogeneity and creation.

The programme for Pydym outlined these concerns:

*What do you know about Britain? It's an island. It rains. It's violent. Shakespeare. The usual clichés about a post-colonial, post-industrial Britain exhausted by its own history. But as one Brith ends, so another might begin. Exactly two hundred years ago poets, politicians and preachers began to imagine new futures for this country. In a Europe in turmoil, visionaries such as William Blake and Iolo Morganwg dared to construct new utopias, to invent nations. Pydym is inspired by their vision, proposing new agendas in performance and politics. A theatre in the making, a work of invention. Not for the faint hearted, Pydym urges participation. For deep in the crowd something is stirring. (Brith Gof 1995b)*

The performance was divided into two sections with very different atmospheres: the first part, entitled 'Critique', dealt with issues such as 'empire, heritage, event, museum, borders, authenticity, dissent, multiculturalism' (Brith Gof 1995a). Its mood was dark, with a dominance of black and white colours, and featuring aggressive, often violent movements modelled on political marches, accompanied by a hard 'trash-metal' soundtrack by German-Slovene composer Robert Mierdoz. The second section, 'Construct', was designed as the direct opposite of the first: dealing with the 'post-colonial, contemporary process, imagination, network, hybridity, community, multiculturalism'. Its atmosphere was light, colourful and celebratory, with a 'jungle' dance track by Welsh DJs Reu-ruv and movements modelled on contemporary fashion shows. Pearson himself claimed that 'Part Two exemplifies a new set of optimistic attitudes in Brith Gof' (Brith Gof 1995a).

The most striking aspect of Pydym was its already-mentioned involvement of the audience as co-performers. Every night fifty special tickets were sold to so-called 'audience participants'. The audience-participants carried out vital parts of the physical choreography of the work: they were asked to lift performers, move around parts of the set, join in a staged political protest, etc. All instructions for





Zeit der Pyralen (1996) photo: Golden Wilhelm, 2004

these actors were conducted during the performance, led by Brith Gof's performers, in full view of the rest of the audience. A major part of the rehearsal process had been devoted to developing the techniques necessary to teach and animate a group of participants in a short period of time. So called 'passages', involving performers and audience-participants, alternated with 'events', involving only performers. The 'events' were pre-rehearsed elements which punctuated the performance and helped to reassemble it after the dispersed action of a 'passage'. The choreography of the 'passages' became increasingly complex, intricate and intense, and the connection between performers and audience-participants ever more intimate. *Phydan* was composed as a 'set' of these physical sequences, movements and occurrences, which were reordered anew in each performance, thus retaining an element of unpredictability.

The model for the kind of performative participation that the work attempted to emulate was that of rave culture, with its ad hoc gatherings of large, participatory crowds. Pearson put forward a concept for *Phydan* which focuses on the dramaturgy of the 'crowd' and its energetic possibilities:

*It begins with an empty space - a field, a room, a shed ... And into this space we put a group of people, just standing: they have the status of a crowd. As yet, there is no formal arrangement of performers and spectators, no preordained acting areas - nothing that resembles a stage, no fixed viewpoints, no clues what to watch. Suddenly, within the mass, an incident occurs: a fight breaks out. And simultaneously several things happen. The crowd steps back, withdraws, to give the action space. They take up the best position for watching a circle. A proto-playing area - a temporary space - is created, constantly redefined by the activity of the combatants, who remain in three-dimensions. The crowd may be active, shouting encouragement, pushing in to jostle the participants, encouraging, anguishing the area. Or they may constantly withdraw to try and avoid the combat. (Pearson 1990c)*

The fight scene as a model of theatrical communication for Pearson encapsulates the essence of his concept of performance: an energetic moment of physical exertion, leading to a temporary creation of space, an on-the-spot separation between active participants and watchers, a non-hierarchical multitude of perspectives. Most importantly, it seems to suggest a collapse of the distance between performer and audience in a moment of mutually energized somatic contact. Yet, it is at the very core of the moment that a gap opens up that deeply problematizes the idea of 'co-presence' in the act of theatrical communication.

## 5.

Pearson differentiates elsewhere the various somatic channels that can be involved in theatrical communication as he envisages it:

*[...] began to realize that if in our work performers were working in three dimensions and that there may be in many different physical relationships with each other, and with an audience, and that if we were putting pressure on all three of those sets of relationships, performer to performer, performer to spectator and spectator to spectator, then we might be able to work with the other elements, and the under-considered elements I think, [sic!] of physical communication. Almost every theatre practice uses gesture, kinesics, physical movements, but I also began to think that perhaps we could begin to generate material which was entirely based on proxemics, the distances between people [...] Equally to begin to work with haptics, which is the touch of self and others [...] (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 54-5)*

This exploration of proxemics and haptics in performance was influenced by Pearson's collaboration with David Levett (now Lyn Levett), a performer, composer and musician with cerebral palsy. Levett's disability is customarily described as 'making jerky or uncontrolled movements' but, according to Pearson, 'we do know what Dave means, is intending, despite the fact that he is not making conventional signs in any way at all' (Pearson in Brith Gof 1995: 59). Pearson seems to imply a distinction here between what the performer intends and what he or she signals or presents. He himself refers in this context to Eugenio Barba's concept of 'pre-expressivity'.

Barba has described 'pre-expressivity' as 'the level which deals with how to render the actor's energy scenically alive, that is, with how the actor can become a presence which immediately attracts the spectator's attention' (Barba and Savarese 1991: 188). With the help of training, which Barba distinguishes as an extra-daily acculturation of the body from the acculturation of daily behaviour, a performer is able to organise physical action into a physical 'score' ('a precise and deniable sequence of actions performed by the body or voice'), the smallest unit from which a performance is built. A physical score has both a semiotic dimension and a somatic dimension - and it is this capacity to communicate on a somatic level as a force felt in the body that characterizes 'pre-expressivity'.

Barba is clearly inspired by Grotowski's conceptualization of 'presence', but removes it from its concomitant notion of self-revelation (see Auslander 1997 for a critical discussion of Grotowski in the light of Derrida's deconstruction of 'presence') by locating the performer's identity in the pre-expressive capacity of his or her performance tradition rather than in personal expression. Nigel Stewart (Stewart 1993) has attempted successfully to consider Barba's theory of pre-expressivity in terms of Derrida's



analysis of Freud's model of the neurological aspects of consciousness, perception and memory in the traditional model our consciousness perceives an event as it occurs and then stores it as a memory. For Freud, on the other hand, an event does not enter consciousness directly, but first causes an excitation in the neurological system. It is, however, not in the perceptual neurons that the event leaves a trace: the trace is retained in another type of neuron, where it appears as an electro-chemical resistance opposing contact-barriers to the initial excitation. It is only later that these re-presentations selectively accede to consciousness and become the 'perceived'. The 'perceived' is thus always already a reproduced event (Derrida 1978: 211) by the time it is perceived. 'We are the eternal late-comers to the "now" of our experience' (Richard Harland, as quoted in Stewart 1993). Stewart argues that for Barba too, the body is no more a supplement to the intention of the performer than for Derrida the unconscious is a supplement to the conscious. In the evolution of a physical score the performer does have an event 'in mind', but this event, following Derrida, would have always already been a reproduced event by the time it is perceived, in which the 'original' intention has been displaced and made significant by the work of the pre-expressive properties of the performer's body. Moreover, this event is no more than a pre-text for the body's further reproduction of it. Within each action, the pre-expressive properties of the performer's body makes certain that any intended movement is displaced and reproducible. It is only with the repetition of the event as a reproduced and displaced event that it begins to suggest meaning.

Stewart thus argues that 'in creative work there is always a gap [...] between what the performer intends and what the performer presents' (Stewart 1993: 382). The relationship between intention and presentation, consciousness and body, experience and representation is reversed and displaced. According to Pearson, Levett offers a model for such a displacement, but one in which the displacement is structured not by training or performance tradition, but by the particular physical condition of the disabled body. Although 'decided' (cf. Barba and Savarese 1991: 18) on a level of intention, the presentation of the movements of Levett's body would often be random and unpredictable. Levett works with the actions his body wants to make, rather than training his body to make the actions he wants. He nevertheless manages to communicate. The experience of the disabled performer thus highlights the gap between intention and presentation. In order to reproduce this form of energetic performance in the able-bodied performers, Pearson attempted to make performance conditions for them ever more difficult and unpredictable in order to increase the gap between intention and presentation. To return to the beginning of Prydan and the example of the naked performer moving across the space blindfold with his arms stretched out, balancing the two burning books in his hands, thus restricted in his movements by cold darkness and fire, the performer's physical score here becomes displaced and begins to suggest meanings in excess of those originally intended.

As Andrew Houston has argued, for the audience of Prydan this event had as much meaning through their proxemic and haptic experience of it as through the signifying process of the narrative. 'As the physical score develops the proxemics and haptics of the [...] event, there is a shift in the [...] energy and presence of the performer as he/she is "felt" by the spectators' (Houston 1998: 247). Prydan goes one step further by bringing the audience-participants spectators actively into this energy field, activating their 'score' as well and thus staging a complex intersection and juxtaposition of physical scores that go to work on the various levels of pre-expressivity. Andrew Houston here speaks of 'a kind of metamorphosis of meaning which is engendered from the intersection of physics scores, and the re-location of these scores into indeterminate contexts created by audience participation' (Houston 1998: 250).

As Pearson himself has claimed:

*Instead of making a performance which is meant to be about something - about the conflict of these many opinions and perspectives of Britain - we decided we had to make a performance which is something, that is the experience of this situation. It occurred to me that perhaps the only way to deal with these conflicting opinions and perspectives was to try to 'embody' what is going on in Britain. That is, to create a situation where some people are willing to participate, and push things a little, and some people are more likely to watch [...] Ultimately we decided to go to work on the form of an experience rather than trying to find a line on the subject matter (Pearson as quoted in Houston 1998: 255).*

With the decision to work on the form of the experience of the audience, Pearson attempted to politicise Barba's primarily technical notion of presence. Underlying this attempt was the desire to devise a way of generating communal energy in the co-presence of performers and spectators, an energy that may have the potential to be transformed into political change. Yet the gap between intention and presentation, that helps to structure the particular semiotic workings of the piece so it communicates through the somatic qualities of the performer's body, also at the same time forces apart the moment of co-presence of performers and spectators. It may be this gap that could have contributed to the 'failure' of the performance, a failure which Pearson himself has located in the relationship between performer and audience:

*There's a performance I've struggled to make...and failed. Why? [...] Perhaps because theatre itself is knackered, on its knees, ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of post-colonial society, a society where we've been led to believe that the only safe place is 'at*

home' ] Unfortunately, however exciting the choreography, you get stuck in the same institutionalised relationship with what's going on. And we all know our place (Brith Gof 1998b)

Pols had learned from this failure: Whilst it too drew parallels between theatrical and political participation and between theatrical representation and political representation, it acknowledged and figured the gap that exists in all communality, theatrical or political. In the acknowledgement it made its political stance. Performance as a practice which has concentrated on the conduct of the 'here and now', on matters of presence and co-presence, on a moment of genuine encounter, has been widely appreciated since at least the 1960s, when it moved out of the realm of the theatrical and into other kinds of social venues, including mass media and corporate business. 3) Against such appropriation of the 'now' on behalf of power and control, what seems to be needed today is a performance and a politics of the 'nearly now' - where the co-presence of performers and audiences is put under pressure until a gap opens between intention and presentation, presentation and perception, a gap where the nature of communality and difference can be explored.

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## Notes

1) Prydan was performed several months before the British General Election of May 1995, which was to endorse Labour's plans for a Welsh Assembly: the first national institution of political self-representation in Wales in over seven hundred years albeit one with restricted powers. Whilst Prydan was concerned with a re-evaluation of a nationalised agenda in the light of the prospect of self-government, Pols was very much an Assembly inspired piece, dedicated to an exploration of the institution of democracy from scratch.

2) I owe the application of Barba's model and Stewart's interpretation of it to an analysis of Prydan to Andrew Houston (1996).

3) For a full discussion see Nigel Thrift (2000).

# Taming the Vague: Gavella's Theoretical, New Actor-Spectator

Marin Blažević

Translated from the Croatian by Lara Pittling-Melzow





The two anecdotal studies that read Gavella differently and pointed towards new directions in Gavellistological research (and no, better – the first was deemed “controversial” and the second continues to be groved)

In the book *Uvod u fenomenologiju suverenog* (Introducing glomda: Introduction to the Phenomenology of the Phenomenon) Croatian Theatre: Zagreb, 1999 Venera Zupac has promoted actor-person to the centre of Gavella's theory (opposing the earlier stress on the relationship between the literature and theatre), and introduced the topic of Gavella's theoretical participation in the “studies of the class of the new European theatre” (118)

The new European theatre is at its onset actually caught by its factorial person Edward Gordon Craig tries to abolish it. Anton Artaud radically change it. Bertolt Brecht free it of habits. Branko Gavella liberates it. The persona of the actor in the new European theatre is problematic and problematized

In her book *Kazalište sugre* (The Theatre of Co-play: Zagreb, 2001) Saba Pelević uses Gavella's interdisciplinary theory within “the provisional field of theoretical systems of the theatre in particular Prague situation”, of “phenomenology and cognitive theory” (7–43) and concludes that “Gavella has formulated or at least indicated all the subjects that have continued to preoccupy theory to the day leaving plenty of room for future discussion”

One of the assumptions of the scientific project Branko Gavella - Theatre History Theory Criticism Culture Initiated by Miroslav Babić at the Department of Dramaturgy and Theory, the Academy of Drama Art in Zagreb, is that Gavella's theory can be placed at the very locus (and dragged out of the shadow) of the new theatre paradigm and rethought in the virtual dialogue with inclusive analytical theories and theories of production (cf. Final analysis) written by authors such as Stanislavski Meyerhold Artaud Piscator Brecht Jovanović Grotowski Brook Barba

New insights into Gavella's theory of acting/theatre and the results of further research on the manuscripts from Gavella's heritage are the basic reasons to approach the publishing of the new revised and expanded edition of Gavella's most important theoretical book *Glasnik i kazalište* (Actor and Theatre), that will serve as the foundation for the first edition of the selected texts by Gavella in English. The book entitled *Acting: a Theory* will be published in November 2004.

1. The problem of the new tragedy is connected to the problem of the new man: the new hero – the hero who is great not because he lifted himself above others who is interesting not because he fears sentimentally that he will resemble everybody else – who is not a hero of romantically imposed deeds, but a hero who fights to overthrow within himself all the barriers dividing him from his fellow humans; who wants to be great because he carries in himself a conscious force of the organized masses (Gavella 1987: 9)

2. Gavella's use of the term experience is modelled on the German *Erfahrung*

3. representation of dramatic literary text plus awareness of reality

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and even to this day, a dominant position in the Croatian theater has been held by a type of performing that (re)produces and maintains the hierarchical relationship between elements and disciplined subjects of the structure, situation and process of representation: the theatrical stage (conceptualized by Dimežić) of dramatic theater and “therapeutic” realism (as it was exposed by Lyotard) Director and theoretician Branko Gavella (1885–1962), the key figure of 20<sup>th</sup> century Croatian theater, also fell victim to that kind of practice

Partly through the anecdotal oral tradition of his students, an entire crew of directors and actors, the so-called Post-Gavellians, who declared themselves to be the centers of the Secret given to them directly by Gavella, partly through disputable or even biased diagnosis of the representatives of mainstream Croatian theater and drama studies, Gavella's work was successfully refashioned so that it was precisely him who can appear as sacrosanct patron of the theological, realistic, dramatic, mimetic, verbal, literary theater. Everything that did not fit into the well laid out composition of the icon because of its vagueness, or simply because it didn't (being too avant-garde), was simply removed or passed over in silence! Gavella's theory was turned into simple formulas

Here are three

1. Gavella is “the advocate of (national) literature in the theater” and as such, soundly skeptical about the experiments of the new theater, especially non-verbal theater
2. According to this falsified Gavella, “literature is the source of theater and the word is the origin of theatrical work”

And my favorite is the formula describing the process of actor creation

3. “Building material (the actor himself as subject physiognomy, body, voice, movement, gesture) plus inserted material (words, thoughts and ideas of the writer as something objective and external)”

It would take too much space to describe in more detail the aesthetic and political project of evading the decisive acts of Gavella's theatrical performance which primarily bring the whole performing body-mind organism into the focus of the theater phenomenon, and thereby the resonance of senses, organic experience, body's peripheral radiation, the ability of the actor to perform even in the domain of innovation, to transfer his vitality to the spectator. Leaving the context of (reading) Gavella's writing outside the focus of this essay, I shall first of all probe into the ways Gavella's theatrical performance uses some of the strategies (e.g. dramatic action and character) – rather than serving the whole institutionalized machinery – of the theological stage and of realism, in order to transgress and overcome – rather than re-produce and re-view – them

Let me first give a few introductory remarks

1. When in the manifesto *Putovi k novom Jašaru* (Towards a New Theater), published in 1958, Gavella calls for a new tragedy and new pathos, he is not advocating the restoration of tragedy as a dramatic and literary genre, but rather invites us to once again face the tragic action, which alone is representative and normative enough in order to function in the process of creating new man? New man then still being a “hero” who is to “find a real, sincere pathos of a new feeling of life” since that pathos “will be the measure for the actor, to which he will have to tune his artistic instrument” in order for him to “freely create what only he can create: his new house, the new theater” (Gavella 1987: 8–10). Although the revolutionary pathos and ethos got replaced over the following few years by the complex, unfinished, paradoxical, in places even vague and incomprehensible, almost contradictory theoretic system, there are still traces of the 1958 manifesto to be found in Gavella's later work: the “hero” who “comes in himself a conscious force of the organized masses” and “lights to overthrow within himself all the barriers dividing him from his fellow humans” (ibid.) becomes a tragic actor's and dramatic character who negotiates the aesthetic and social responsibility of theater to the new, ideal personality of the actor. By provoking experience<sup>2</sup> and then reactive theoretical impositions of the normative structure of representation, it pushes the spectator towards developing a “new relation to reality” (ibid. 167, 168)

2. If the program of the theater's emancipation from literature and the restraints on autonomy as opposed to reproductiveness of theatrical art<sup>3</sup> are at the root of the new theater paradigm, then, according to Gavella, the actor's performance can primarily be the source of continuous innovations and emancipation. What makes the actor's performance a series of acts of potentially unlimited innovational capacity is not only the possibility to restore (in every act of acting) the question of authority, role, voice (and even body) distribution within a representational situation, but also the fact that every act of acting – performed by the actor as the only physically present subject-generator in/of the process of theatrical representation – is constantly exposed to contingency and sudden (potentially aesthetic) deformation. The ever “immediately actual” (cf. Stanes 1985: 154), and thus live, volatile performance of acting is for Gavella the central problem of a “complicated phenomenon called theatre” (Gavella 1987: 18), a problem unavoidably sunk into vagueness, whether it be on the level of perception or on the level of the reception of the performance and its interpretational or theoretical re-view

3. In his *Uvodna razmatranja k estetskoj analizi kazališta i glume* (Towards an Aesthetic Analysis of Theatre and Acting: introductory considerations), written in 1950, Branko Gavella found the fundamental problem of analyzing acting to be “the question (...) of the difference between the person who creates the scenic aesthetic character, and that character in its realized form.” The line of paradox, where the “creating subject and



he created object" simultaneously "merge and diverge" in "the same psychological entity", is "unclear and vague" (ibid. 37). Attempts at describing such inner turmoil in ourselves, let alone in others, to comprehend their "experiential immediacy and intimacy" (ibid. 50) discursively will finally bring us to silence or - metaphors - yet, despite such a perspective and before facing the silence<sup>6</sup> or reaching out for metaphor, Gaviella's theoretical performance focuses on the attempt to analyze the actor's and spectator's performance in detail and describe the process of creating the composite personality of the both actor and spectator. Gaviella's theoretical system (unfinished, fragmentary, constitutively paradoxical, in places vague and incomprehensible, sometimes even contradictory) might be described as an exploration, a challenging of the very limitations, unavoidable as these may be, brought about by the attempted discursive taming of the appearance of the vague, volatile and incomprehensible as the product/effect of the performance, which, according to Gaviella, can be found primarily in the "confused, coagulated node" (ibid. 93) of psycho-physiological inner happening (and its outward manifestations) that is the basic active material of acting creation.

4. Acting is always an interaction of (at least) two actions: the intensifying of organic experiencing and the work of performing technique from one side and the pressure of the spectator's gaze, the necessity of expression and normative action from the other, opposing side. The pressure (of the action) from outside, however, should never overpower or suppress inner happening, but guarantee - through keeping the two actions in the game of mutual demolition and urgent balance repair - the strongest possible surge of organic experiencing that should in a crucial moment bring both the actor and the spectator to a completely exceptional state: complete fusion and a reactive, indeed reflexive, flash of new light - to the total act!

5. Only one of the paradoxes of Gaviella's theory emerges from this arch that the actor has to draw between the two extreme points of his experience/performance, its first spark and last explosion, an arch that would burst were it not for the pressure from actions, the normative factors, that are to tame these same experiences. A temporary conclusion imposes itself: that Gaviella's theory of the theater and acting implies the thesis that we are that much closer to new theater the harder we work in the nearness of the vague - with the intent to tame it, yet never harness it completely.

But, let us rewind and start from the beginning.

According to Gaviella's theory of theater/acting, neither is literature the source of theater, nor are word and speech the first origin of literature and theater: in the beginning of acting and in the beginning of theater there are a) potentially aesthetic experience and b) theory.

The actor's so-called private partition is the subjective place of inception of the actor's creation. The first material of acting are clusters and curves of experience scattered all over the organism, conceived by the aesthetic intention of the actor towards some object, happening or content. The initial aesthetic experience, as well as all particular (potentially aesthetic) experiences that differ from the usual, automated, everyday experiencing, are caused and accompanied by particular organic sensations and reflexes. As a consequence of such psychophysical change, a new state of the entire actor's organism is gradually being born, specially sensitized to further breaks in automated perception and to the intensive experiencing of all "our internal and external origins" (ibid. 108). Organic experiences, sensations and reflexes, however, are subjective, vague, amorphous in quality and vast in quantity (ibid. 126, 127), so that the actor would simply wander through the landscapes of private person, if the new experiencing from its very inception did not activate the inner theoretic analysis, with a particular outer effect.

According to Gaviella's analysis of the "simplest fact of the apprehension of a work of art", "we will always find in it some sort of an attempt at explaining the aesthetic impression, however rudimentary" (ibid. 100, 101). Gaviella was aware of the fact that reception as "undoubtedly a constitutive part of the whole artistic composition" does not only include subjective experiential series of blurry, vague, incomprehensible, private material/content, but also "necessarily entails the moment of analysis, and with it, of course, the need for theory" (ibid.). As theory becomes possible only through the attempt to distance oneself from the exclusively experiential approach to the object and by taking the position of observer, the actor's creation intertwines from the very beginning with self-observation. An inner spectator - who later also becomes representative of the outer, physical, real spectator - is born within the actor. Even more so, another's gaze, a spectator's gaze, gives rise to a special attentiveness in the actor (as in any other person), some stated state of consciousness that wants to seize control over the functioning of the entire organism, remove automation from everyday reactions, experiencing and behavior, change posture and stance before the observer, bring all sensations and emotions into the center of consciousness, that is, the focus of attention: "the object that comes in itself an artistic account incites an almost automatic primary reaction with respect to its aesthetic intention - but on the other that reaction likewise primarily includes an aspiration towards some kind of control over itself." (ibid.)

Actor's self-formation through inner observation and control of the organic sensations and the states of experiencing caused by them, his "autochthonous, autonomous" (ibid. 106) artistic material - which is always only relatively free because of the "connectedness of art to the whole cultural-social sphere of human action" (ibid. 78) - leads towards the forming of a new personal form, as Gaviella called it - the technical

<sup>6</sup> Quite literally as Gaviella never finished his "large manuscript on the theory of acting and theater" announced in the book magazine *Komedie* in 1935, under the title "Fragments on the theory of acting". Parts of the manuscript were published only posthumously in 1967, while many of the notes published before Gaviella's death in 1952 anticipate or implicitly refer to the theoretical insights developed in the manuscript.

<sup>7</sup> This is a phrase in the complex process of creation of the (not only artistic) personality of the actor that stretches from the first experiential impulse - which gave rise to series of vague and blurry organic experiences, but also to the act of inner self-observation as the beginning of self-formation - all the way to the start of adopting normative representative contents that marks also the end of, according to Gaviella, pure acting.



Vil Matula and Daniel Bardi (left) in *The Rocking chair* (Rado Muzar)

<sup>2</sup> On the creation, functioning and misperceptions, see presentation of the technical actor's person I recently published in a more comprehensive article titled "Director vs. Actor" in the thematic issue of *Postdramatic Actor/acting/Performance* (V 20(2) 2009/2011). This occasion was the subversive function of Vil Matula's acting performance in the concourse, lobby of the play *Iskariot's Master* (see also *Grand Master of AF Soundreht* directed by Branko Brnovac. Therefore I will proceed to the next stage of the actor's composite person.

<sup>3</sup> actor as an *enquirer* before the performance assumed series of acts that are to be performed and then the immediately actual doing itself.

<sup>4</sup> That acting technique itself may acquire an exceptional aesthetic, ethic, even political quality I have already tried to prove in the aforementioned article on the example of metatechnician Vil Matula's performance.

actor's person: the primary, artificially created form of creation that will "perform the function of defining the immanently undefined state of that 'representative material'" (ibid. 157) and set the foundation, as well as the axis, of the actor's performance technique - the static centre (ibid. 157).

Bendable yet unbendable, constantly present yet hidden, the static centre - neutral state, active alertness, balance, directly linked to other factors of performance technique such as the medial origin line or new posture - is rooted in the body and the consciousness of the actor as the exit point and control point of every move, incline, form, even deformity in the area of outer, visual and acoustic means of transfer, melodic movement of speech and movement of the body in the form of gestures.

However, the technical person in itself is still according to Gavella, much too connected with the actor's private person and filled with far too vague experiential material to be able to turn material and form into exceptional and representative content, a curve into a clearly directed line the common into the extraordinary, the automatic or the spontaneous into the aesthetic and thus attract the spectator's attention and transmit events to the spectator that are unworkable and intensive enough in order for the spectator to accept the play and jump out of his own everyday joint. Although the inner

spectator/observer already performs the tasks of controlling, sorting and forming the material of pure acting, on the level of technical person it is still not possible to achieve a dimension that to the outer spectator would appear clear, visible, representative, authoritative and convincing enough, because it lacks action<sup>6</sup>, as the axis of the socially and aesthetically normative structure/score to which the private person in form of the technical one will tie its inner contents and thus express them and make them (repeatedly) presentable, visible and comprehensible - objective its subjectivity.

Gavella's actor must therefore be ready to put his newly created technical person in service of an efficient performance of the action and at the same time expand it with new contents acquired from the domain of aesthetically already standardized other arts, above all dramatic art, or rather the art of drama, i.e. the art of action, but also from the "general codifications which rule all the domains of our life" (ibid. 163). On the level of normative person, which is "clearly defined in its relation to the objective happening" (ibid. 115), the actor's person most apparently presents a "primal, fundamental and organic sociality of acting" (ibid. 14) and thus finally becomes representative and interesting for the spectator, according to Gavella, it is only then that it becomes artistically valuable<sup>7</sup>, but still remains incomplete and not efficient enough.

Character is the fourth phase of actor's creation in which the actor-persona achieves determination of a "subject different from any number of other subjects" (ibid. 121, 122), i.e. a certain individuality - opposed to the adjustment, typicality and commonness of the normative person - as a unique fusion of normative, or rather, performative (social, cultural, relational, gender-related) identities, spontaneous or conscious self-formation and still insufficiently determined private experiences and contents. Again, an efficient action is necessary as the axis of the individual development of the actor's person, and not only of its normative determination.

Yet, just as he has determined the distinctive feature of character - characteristic experiencing, as the consequence of the domination (or lack) of one of the elements of the human world - reactive, emotional or intellectual, Gavella falls into a paradox. Namely, on the level above character, Gavella also glimpses the possibility of an "ideal interconnectedness of all the elements, i.e. the ideal order in the shifting dominance of each individual element" (ibid. 122) that is particular to the ideal personality of the actor. Such an ideal personality may become a "normative mirror, i.e. the ideal normative person of the actor" (ibid.), even in above-average person that will then cope more easily with above-average events, "the extraordinary happening, i.e. the happening both interesting to and obligatory for the spectator" (ibid.). The ideal personality - in and by which the actor's private, normative and technical persons, and thus also the character, are entirely balanced - is almost conceived as a unique, odd, virtual, paradoxical, technically-normative, subjectively-objective, uniquely-typical, psycho-physical, let's say meta-organism, due to which all these inner happenings function perfectly in order to maximize the efficiency and value of basic means of expression, voice/word and movement/gesture.

Still, how are we to make up for the characteristic lack that shows itself as (momentary) imbalance, i.e. as dominance of one element as opposed to the ideal, balanced order in domination and that constantly threatens to push character further and further away from ideal normativity and closer to uncontrolled bursts of blurry and vague experiential material? Speaking of the relationship of the actor's technical and normative persons, Gavella insists on a balanced performance before the spectator: neither too vague a private content, nor too seductive a technical virtuosity and too rigid a normative construction. The demand for balance is also translated onto higher levels of the actor's composite person, but this balance must not be, so to speak, passive.

If we are to follow Gavella, the challenge and the purpose of balancing are not in constant maintaining the balance: balance should be broken and restored over and over again - the high risk (i.e. in his words, the vertiginous goal) of acting lies in the constant and suspenseful game of for balancing in-between) merging and diverging. On all levels of the multi-layered personality of the actor who creates (from) himself, Gavella finds the necessity of a double (finally multiple) and

thus also unavoidably paradoxical and potentially always unbalanced experiencing, feeling, doing, presenting, happening, in short - living, and thereby a stimulation of the constant and ever greater tension between the two (finally many) confronted faces of the same person. Let us take a short step back: the technical person emerges from and in opposition to the private person, although the objective normative person gets its content from the outside, it necessarily and subjectively intertwines with the technical (and in the technical also with the private) person. Character is, finally, also a (at least) double paradoxical identity, and therefore, so Gavella, a double name becomes it: the actor-dramatic character, which is rooted in the actor's private person, has the technical person in its act-expression, the normative-dramatic person in its sign-structure-frame, and ideal personality in perspective.

Instead of working on a complete merging of his own (actor's) character and the other, dramatic character, as the peak of acting creation in the dramatic theater of psychologically-realistic orientation, Gavella's actor, due to the ever so uncertain outcome, is absorbed into an increasingly tense co-play of experience and theory along the always vague borderline between the actor's and the dramatic pole of identity within and on several levels of the same, and yet divided psychological unit. More intensive inner organic experiencing simultaneously awakens a stronger need for theoretical taming - that is, for a new break, distance, separation, self-observation.<sup>10</sup>

Gavella's (theoretical) actor therefore needs such a dramatic action that will in its entire content, flow and structure be able to supply him, after his experiential self-birth, progressively with new normative, aesthetically (but also socially) functional contents as stimuli and motives of new series of organic experience and thereby of the actor's further reactive, emotional, intellectual and in the end also ethical self-formation directed towards the final establishment of an inner experientially-theoretic and an outer expressional balance, as well as - at least in perspective - a social and cultural balance that will be personified and represented by the ideal personality of the actor. Still, there are numerous new paradoxes on the road to such a new, indeed utopian value of human life.

The actor can come close to the culmination of acting only if one of the sides of the dual character, actor's and dramatic, strains itself to its maximum in order to achieve the unreachably ideal technical-normative personality, while the other side - the side of dramatic character - leads to a completion, "a definitive rounding up of the character" (ibid. 124), which on the other hand is always marked by the (fatal) lack in relation to the presupposed ideal. Therefore, the ideal action required by Gavella's theory can only be a tragic action, for only the tragic action ends with death (at least apparent) as the end of organic experiencing, as the total lack of experiencing in the absolute dominance of organs-flesh. When he insists on the death of the acting-dramatic character - that is the literal death of the fictional

<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the experiential material thus formed (and later expressed) gives rise to a more intense self-experiencing of the self, of the acting person as an aesthetic object in the making and opens up a new circle of play that is the more effective, the higher the stake of the experiencing and the broader the view of theoretic scope are.

persona and the metaphorical death (and game) of the physically present actor, Gaviella presumes that death is an event of the deepest and most intense experiential potential, for then, as Orlovskii proclaims (1997: 31, 32), as the result of psychic shock in brutal situation "the life-mask cracks and falls away." And not only the actor's mask.

Namely, we constantly have to keep in mind that in the vertiginous twists of Gaviella's theory [of theater and acting], one often loses the line in which merge and diverge not only the "creating subject and the created object" (Gaviella 1967: 37), but also the "observer and the active creator" (ibid: 101), that is the actor and the spectator. The final paradox of the actor, according to Gaviella, that vertiginous goal of being observer-spectator and observed-actor simultaneously (ibid: 158, 159) in one psycho-physiological entity, the happening of the theatrical situation in the inner life of one, doubled, yet on each interactive pole multiple personality, creates from and of the actor a peculiar, stabilized, composite person that the spectator not only can but indeed will recognize as his representative on stage, but also as the authoritative - aesthetically and ethically significant - source of experiential impulses and regulator of his own inner acting.

Acting is a selection and intensification of the organic psychophysical resonances of man's experience which, through optical and acoustic transference, notes in its audience the psychosomatic phenomena that become bearers of a particular emotional experience. Acting is therefore not Schauspiel but Mitspiel. Mitspiel means that all those psychosomatic functions that an actor needs in order to perform a gesture or to utter a word are potentially active in the spectator. We do not conceive of an actor through listening to and looking at him, but through a process parallel to his actions, the process of awakening in us all the organic elements that follow and regulate these actions. (ibid: 24)

Gaviella's theater, as it is named in the title of Siba Petlevski's (2001) study, is primarily a theater of co-play between actor and spectator; their actions (real and potential), organic experiences and theories. The culmination of Mitspiel, of the actor's *real* and the spectator's *potential* acting-action, appears after the process of repeated disruption and restoring of balance for the heightening of performance intensity - but only after the performative tension between the dramatic character and actor's persona, the character and the *ideal* personality, the forces of merging and diverging is brought to paroxysm. Only the *real* bite into the heart and senses (Artaud), as a violent organic experience before which sign disappears and layers of representational structures melt away, can instantly provide an interruption in the process of the actor's (and thus the spectator's) self-creation. The most powerful push towards the escalation of experience at the peak of performance can be guaranteed by death - the sacrifice of the dramatic character that ends the *ideal* tragic action, while

the participants of the Mitspiel are swiftly transferred into a state of instantaneous self-oblivion. It, even for a moment, the inner process of self-contemplation/forming, otherwise parallel to experiencing, becomes blocked under pressure from extremely intensive experiencing, there appears the possibility of transgressing into the state of living presence, or a momentary (organic) feeling that the relation of the image to its object (Gaviella) apparently is not directed by logic (and politics) or representation anymore. Apparently, because the living presence in moments of intensive experiencing still is only the effect, reflex of experience, that almost immediately provokes a reaction: a new break, distance, difference and thus a new code of theoretical (self-)observation and a new and more intense urge for (inner) self-formation of ever wider range and of ever-growing (self-)creative effect, which is why after oblivion/death immediately follows - a new birth.

The peak (of effectiveness) of a performance by Gaviella's (theoretical) actor-spectator is the paradoxical, let us call it enobeginning, the moment of death/birth: the functional and on the level of fictional reality literal death of dramatic character; that on the other hand provokes also the experience of death/birth of the co-players, both actor and spectator, who are instantly and with full intensity once again turned towards their private, vague contents, but also soon ready for clearer, more comprehensive and orderly inner self-reflective action, and thus for more effective work towards the *ideal*.

But, be warned: if discursively still possible, perceptively it is utterly impossible to divide the privileged Moment into organic experiential action and theoretic reaction, the emergence of experience and the new break-through of theory. Violent organic experiencing that provided momentary self-oblivion is instantaneously connected with the peak of concentration, the maximally heightened, so Gaviella, "sense of self" (ibid: 25) the actor-spectator and the spectator-actor should find themselves in a state of controlled falling into total (un-)consciousness.

The actor and the spectator are in an exceptional and privileged situation: the death of the dramatic character is giving them the chance to look back, but also stay this side of life, lest they should at least apparently overcome death, living through the experience of death (of the dramatic character) could become the beginning of a new quality of life.

As the personality of the actor grows out of its primitive, so to speak organic, sensuous beginnings, so also the notion of the spectator develops but of a void individual, desiring to be filled with a new kind of experience, and reaches the individual who, by receiving in himself the act of the actor, finds a new light in which to observe himself, a new plenitude of his own personality (ibid., 167).

Gaviella's new actor, as well as the new spectator, is a character who is ever closer to the *ideal* personality, who with every new completion of the

ing, the actor's really active and the spectator's potentially active acting.

The functions of these two equal factors, or rather actors, during the co-play, establish, using Sloba Petkewski's phrase, a dynamic unity on which the director works directly during rehearsals and indirectly during the performance, through the inner observer built into the actor's psycho-physical organism. The director is the only person in Gallelli's theoretical/virtual theater who holds the right to the double, changeable function to literally work as observer one moment and as performer/actor the next, according to the need to tune and direct the co-play: the director's creation becomes realized through acts of overstepping the boundaries of the actor's, i.e. spectator's function. However, the director in Gallelli's theoretical theatre does not take over the role of the sacrosanct author, plenipotentiary of the logos on the theatrical stage. The new director is more like a co-ordinator, a third, distanced co-player, even a critic who moved from the floor to the stage, where logos is replaced by telos: the final creation of the ideal personality of the actor (and his co-players).

The moment/event - of self-obscure in the heightened sense of self - in which, so Gallelli, appears a "new relation to reality" that is no longer "a relation of the image to its object" (ibid 168), when we can already speak only of fluctuation, radiation and vibration (all Gallelli's metaphors), when experiential signals are periodically almost melted with theoretical reflections, organic reactive event with mental control, the spontaneous-instinctive-private with the technical-normative-disciplined body, when, in the words of Grotowski, the merging of opposites gives birth to total act, that moment/event/state is maybe best described in the following words<sup>11</sup>:

This is a technique of the "trance" and of the integration of all the actor's psychic and bodily powers which emerge from the most intimate layers of his being and the instinct, springing forth in a sort of "transluminance" (...). The result is freedom from the time-lapse between inner impulse and outer reaction in such a way that the impulse is already an outer reaction. Impulse and action are concurrent: the body vanishes, burns, and the spectator sees only a series of visible impulses. (Grotowski 1997: 29, 30)

That crucial Moment, when the flow rate of experiential signals (or, closer to Gallelli's terminology - impulses, even immersion acts) is at its most successful, because the representational-normative structure of the ideal tragic action is strained to the utmost - till death, is in fact the moment in which the achieved intensity of experience scattered all over the organism (Gallelli), should finally erase the normative-regulative structure (of the dramatic persona, action, literature) along which it grew.

Gallelli's theater advocates literature and drama only inasmuch as the action (which is the distinctive feature of drama as literary genre) and then also the aesthetic normativity of the literary, as well as other artistic works - always naturally being in a fundamental and organic connection with the cultural-social sphere - can serve as formative elements of both structure and content of a normative score for the actor's and the spectator's evolution towards the ideal as new. Gallelli's theoretical deduction could only be described, one should say, as a paradoxical endeavor: dramatic-literary theater inserted into the theory of new theater, and especially of act-

ing, the actor's really active and the spectator's potentially active acting.

The functions of these two equal factors, or rather actors, during the co-play, establish, using Sloba Petkewski's phrase, a dynamic unity on which the director works directly during rehearsals and indirectly during the performance, through the inner observer built into the actor's psycho-physical organism. The director is the only person in Gallelli's theoretical/virtual theater who holds the right to the double, changeable function to literally work as observer one moment and as performer/actor the next, according to the need to tune and direct the co-play: the director's creation becomes realized through acts of overstepping the boundaries of the actor's, i.e. spectator's function. However, the director in Gallelli's theoretical theatre does not take over the role of the sacrosanct author, plenipotentiary of the logos on the theatrical stage. The new director is more like a co-ordinator, a third, distanced co-player, even a critic who moved from the floor to the stage, where logos is replaced by telos: the final creation of the ideal personality of the actor (and his co-players).

Gallelli's theoretical stage is potentially theological only in so far as it is - teleological. The inversion is crucial. Instead of perpetually representing what is already created (or rather - represented), the actor and spectator are faced with the challenge of (constant) (self-) creation towards the new - a complex and continuous process of performing which guarantees no patronage of the logos nor a promise of telos. (Again: normative structures/scores/contents are used, in the first place, to stimulate and regulate the progress of co-play - and they are not treated as a matrix, offer any kind of unquestionable hierarchy that is to be re-produced by theatrical performance.) Even when the ideal new seems to becoming less vague and blurry, there are always new obstacles, new contingencies, new paradoxes of acting that have to be challenged before - if ever - reaching the veriginous goal. Eventually, acting in Gallelli's virtual theatre cannot be degraded to the reproductive function, it is an open creative process which constantly produces but cannot and as a product. The ideal personality of the actor is more like an imperative, than an entity that will be created. It does not end the process of creation, it should only help actor's work - "towards the aesthetic and social responsibility of our own creation" (ibid: 96).

Although the invocation of new tragedy and new pathos might lead to the conclusion that the action through which the actor-spectator-director goes is directed towards catharsis, the effect of Gallelli's theoretical new-theater performance differs largely from the ideological stabilization as the product of cathartic identification of the actor and spectator with the tragic hero. The tragic hero, as fictional dramatic persona is but a mediator. Gallelli's necessary third (or even - fourth) in the co-play of actor and spectator (and director) which - with the help of a normative structure/score of representation - is to develop alternately and interactively on the level of vitality,

<sup>11</sup> The comparison of some of the aspects of Grotowski's theory of production and the third - analytical productional - theoretical vector drawn by Gallelli, and advocated by Josefa Fériz in her article "Towards a 'Theory of Pure Grouping'" (1994), however, can only be an announcement for some future occasion.

Forsl, Josette (1994) "Towards a Theory of Fluid Groupings", *Theatreschrift*, 5-6, Liber Dramaturge

Gavella, Branka (1967) *Gimnazij i kazalište (Actor and Theatre)*, ed. Nikša Selušić. Nov sad: Strojno proučje

Grotowski, Jerzy (1997) "Towards a Poor Theatre" in *The Grotowski Sourcebook*, eds. Richard Schechner and Lisa Wolford. Routledge: London and New York

Prelević, Stola (2001) *Kazalište zagrje (The Theatre of Gople)*. Gavelin dominus Reorg. Zagreb: Antikbarbarus

Stiles, Berl G. (1996) *Great Performances in Little Rooms, On the Phenomenology of Theater*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Zagreb, Vjeron (1989) *Uvod u fenomenologiju suvremene kazališne glumište: ili: štap i štap (introduction to the Phenomenology of the Contemporary Croatian Theatre)*. Zagreb: Grafiko zavod Hrvatske

experiential impulses, physical enactment, a peculiar, what might be termed - organic action, and on the level of self-observing, re-active theory, heightened consciousness, self-formation, a peculiar, what might be termed - mental action. The goal of the actor-spectator performance is not purification/stabilization in the interest of any normative ethical, political or even poetical system, but the insight into contradictions of the inner life and the attempt to play it with the other: enriching, deepening, widening the performance ethics for which it is hard to find any ideological grounding outside a broadly understood humanity.

*The actor has to be aware that by creating artistically he enters a big socio-moral complex of human creation in general, and that the worth of his creation is measured by the extent to which his creation contributes to the general raising of the worth of human life. The joy of creation can therefore only be the consequence of the awareness that it is valuable in a general human sense (Gavella 1967: 55).*

Quotations from Gavella's book *Gimnazij i kazalište (Actor and Theatre)* translated by Lada Čaňe Pečman and Tomislav Brlek

# Engagement Instead of Arrangement / Julius Koller's Erratic Work on the Re-Conception of Aesthetic Space 1960ff

Georg Schölthammer

In the early decades of the last century, a hopeful spirit of modernism had moved into private ateliers in the art scenes of Bratislava as well. The existential fears from the period of the Stalinist dictate of realism had already elicited initial counter-reactions after 1956 in the extreme subjectivism of tachist painting. Yet the groups and positions that now emerged were able to feel accepted again in the international canon of modernism with their kinetic objects, light works, and their structural-geometric abstraction. In the second post-war decade, a generation of neo-constructivist artist on both sides of the Iron Curtain had formed a kind of international association.

Bratislava was not the center of Czechoslovakia, always a bit disadvantaged by its rival Prague; it was located at the margin. From 1959 to 1965, at the time of the first upheaval, Julius Koller completed his study of painting with Jan Zajíček at the conservative academy of the Slovakian capital.

During these years, the repressive climate was gradually loosened, and the harbingers of the Prague Spring of 1968 made it possible to deal more freely with artistic means of representation - and also enabled a new approach to aesthetic work. In a way, neo-constructive modernism, the new abstraction, which clearly also tied into the grand tradition of Czechoslovakian avant-gardes of the inter-war period, functioned not only as a sign of the end of Stalinism, but also as a kind of repression machine: the new modernism was also a substitute for the errors and oversights of socialism and its models of social modernization, criticized mass culture and its everyday objects, placed artistic work in an abstract space of work on the form, and was the vanishing point from the real world of the Cold War.

Even as a student - at that time he was painting homogeneous urban landscapes for himself, analyses of space pressed into the concrete - Julius Koller already took a critical stance with respect to the modernist principles of order in the political and cultural upheavals in Czechoslovakia in the early sixties. Koller was less interested in the abstract construction of space, within which his artistic work spread out. Instead, he found a new understanding of the social space of the city formulated in the approaches of the international avant-gardes critical of modernism: following Dada and Duchamp, in *Nouveau Réalisme* and *Fluxus*, in the "psychogeographical" explorations of the *Situationist International*. This was a theme, from which it was possible to imagine a different position. Counter to the cynical technocratic fantasies of omnipotence of the socialist state apparatus and its designers, or the Gestalt-therapeutic ambitions of the fashionable modernists, the direct experience of the reality of the artwork was to be returned to the individual. Starting from this idea, Koller has consistently developed his position up to the present day, and an oeuvre that in its stringency, obsession and peculiarity could well be called one of the most erratic and consistent in European contemporary art. It is perhaps most akin to the universe of a Marcel Broodthaers.

Julius Koller was not alone in his rejection of modernist paths in Bratislava of the 1960s. There were a number of thematic, formal or subject matter correspondences, for instance, in the work of the Happsoo group around Z. Kostrows, Stano Filko and Alexander Mlynarczyk, who developed a locally transformed form of object happenings from their contacts with the Parisian Nouveau Réalisme around Pierre Restany and Yves Klein (1964). In fact, through Restany the work of the group around Mlynarczyk - an original amalgamation of Fluxus strategies, pop adaptations and architectonic functionalism critique with a multitude of theatrically surreal elements - was widely received throughout Europe at that time. Also in Stano Filko's psychedelic environments, objects and mappings drawing from McLuhanist media theory and situationist architectural fantasies, there was an expression of a will to deal with the fragmenting of subjectivity in the bureaucratic and organizational apparatuses of Real-Socialist societies in a form-critical way. Their titles were full of cosmological terms and cybernetic metaphors, such as "Universal Environment" or "Poetry about Space-Cosmos", etc. And for the artists in Bratislava in the early 1960s, pop art was also another precedent for a method that enabled using material from cultural everyday production.

These various stimuli - Pop, Flux, Nouveau Réalisme, Dada - and the euphoric notion of being able to turn everything into art, being able to include everything in the system of art, which the group shared, underwent a revision, however, in the work of the young Julius Koller. In 1965, the same year in which the Happsoo Manifesto appeared, Koller published his manifesto

"Anti-happening (System of Subjective Objectivity)"

Contrary to happening, which is a "way to put an artistic act into action", Anti-happening aimed at a "cultural reshaping of the subject, at awareness, at the surroundings and the real world. Through the means of textual designation (making known), cultural demarcation becomes part of the cultural context" states the "Anti-happening".

## Anti-Happening

In Koller's manifesto, a performative act of designation, a conscious act of subjectification through designation, an act of cultural demarcation at the level of production, so to speak, contravenes the myth of regaining the innerness in dramatic self-performance, of the foundation of identity in a liberating psychodramatic act, as it had been imagined by the protagonists of the happening developed from Fluxus. Yet it was not only at the level of aesthetic acts, but also at that of the analysis of the status of the artwork as object that Koller's stance contradicted the mental worlds that were common at that time.

Contrary to Duchamp's transposition of any arbitrary object into the art sphere through simple displacement, Koller's strategy consists of using real objects, the real world, everyday life as a given program for an automatically aesthetic and endless operation - an aesthetic displacement intended to put an end to aesthetics, but which enables a general aestheticization of the world at the same time - because, in fact, potentially every object could enter into this virtual performance.

With a formulation that one could also regard as definite of the Situationist *Internationale*, Koller suggests that the textual existence of the poetic impulse cannot develop the full potential of its radical, anti-hegemonic power. Instead, this power, this potential, can only come into full effect in the realm of concrete action, in an act of designation. Or indeed in a cultural strategy that seeks inclusion in a cultural system, from which the happening seeks its vanishing point, reverses it and represents it as one that is purely definitionally textual, which could be transformed into a system of designation. Koller makes this distinction and transforms the anthropological process into a signifying process: the Anti-Happening.

The Anti-Happening demonstrates conceptual acts or objects. It presents them and thus creates situations - cultural situations. This act of demarcation designates a situation as a cultural space and makes use of non-long concept of the formation of identity. The performative act that Koller poses with his demonstration operations thinks about forms of the functional or emotional utilization and occupation of a place or a situation and makes the exquisite malleability and the rigidity of spatial conventions visible to viewers at the same time. Every real or imagined observer can also conduct themselves contrary to the cultural situation created in the act of designation, but can also experience designating as a characteristic, which first defines the identity of their cultural body.

What Koller employs in his work with his Anti-Happening Manifesto is nothing less than a concept of identity as process, which does not appear to be determined by the cultural situation, but rather is first granted its option for action in the designation.

## Anti-Pictures

This strategy now allowed Koller to extend the designating operation universally to various media: the text works on paper - stamped with children's stamps - began in 1965, indicating the mental space of the Anti-Happening distributed in various editions. This praise was inspired by the Dadists and the Surrealists, who used text and collage extensively in their work, and by the Letinists, whose unitary urbanism aimed to develop emotionally founded city maps, which should then serve as the foundation



for the construction of new, utopian environments

After 1967/1968, the first pictures were also created, in which Koller used white latex paint instead of oil paint, and in which the question mark appears for the first time - which was later to mutate repeatedly in various media and aggregate states into the symbol of Koller's designation stances. Thereafter, these pictures were called Anti-Pictures - after 1968/69 they were also to be given form in a special variation, namely as text pictures on a textile ground, "Textediles"

The "Invitation to an Idea" - as Koller once called the text works on the Anti-Happenings - and the pelmpeests and serial arrangements of the anti-pictures distanced themselves not only formally from the academisms of the modernists and the psychophysical emancipatory gestures of the Happenings and material assemblages of the velleists among Koller's local colleagues. Koller dispensed with any form of technical mastery, for example. The anti-pictures have an amateurish style. In this way, they were to accomplish their mission to "engage instead of arrange" (Koller)

Koller was not interested in pure painting, but rather in developing a pictorial, sign-like typology of the text body. He strung together serial question marks or plus and minus symbols or dots and ellipses that closed into a question mark, wrote the word "reality" in superimpositions or the formula "illusionism", waving lines appeared later, the awastika, rune-like signs, etc. This typology is always thought in relation to its function as a reference to that which it is intended to designate - the counter-space Koller's manifests and reference systems always have a dual character. On the one hand they exist on an abstractness of form and its capability for unlimited repetition, for instance. On the other hand, though, Koller never loses sight, for instance in the anti-pictures, of the materiality of painting linked with the forms

## U.F.O. and U.F.O.naut

In 1970, two years after the brutal suppression of the dreams of a possible third-way socialism in Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact tanks in August 1968, Koller introduced a new three-letter field of concepts into his work in another manifesto: the U.F.O. In this manifesto, from which over the following thirty years and more Koller's main group of works of the same name was to develop, "Universal-Cultural Futurological Operations" - U.F.O., the realistic, anti-illusionist approach of the anti-happenings and anti-pictures is underscored again. However, its possibility for realization is postponed for the future and ironically embedded in a cosmology of uncertainty, the pseudo-science of extraterrestrial flying objects

"SUBJECTIVE CULTURAL ACTIONS-OPERATIONS WHICH IN THE UNIVERSALITY OF OBJECTIVE REALITY FORM CULTURAL SITUATIONS DIRECTED INTO THE FUTURE. THE OPERATIONS WILL EFFECT PSYCHOPHYSICAL PROJECTS OF COSMOHUMANISTIC CULTURE AND INSTEAD OF A NEW ART-AESTHETICS WILL CREATE A NEW LIFE, A NEW SUBJECT, AWARENESS, CREATIVITY AND A NEW CULTURAL REALITY"

The U.F.O. concept thus suspends any connection between Koller's definitive, performative designation work and the passivity of social circumstances in Czechoslovakia of the normalization years. Against the inevitable acceptance of decisions made elsewhere, the various conditionings of private life, the fabrication of the everyday as ideological spectacle, in short against all passivity, the U.F.O. act of designation poses something that is overly enciphered in the media in relation to the event that is always already interpreted, just as it has always been deciphered: a place of emptiness and of determinability, a real place, a place that is not represented, but rather is present - at least in the concept and the medium of its presentation

With the U.F.O., a complex reference and relationship system arises between the acts of designation and their possibility of mutating. In various works in subsequent years, the O has assumed the names object or ornament or orientation or observation or opuscula obnox (release of the image) or olaznik (question mark), etc., the F has mutated into functional, folkloristic, fideographic, philosophic, fantastic, flyer, and so forth

The universal cultural situations that U.F.O. designates can become typical cultural situations, new cultural situations, flying cultural situations, cultic cultural situations, objective cultural situations. Universal functional expertise can be imagined

Yet it is not only these mutations that exist in Koller's system of the U.F.O. and in the indexical space that it assumes in the chronology of the work. There is also a system of recursive ties. Actions can be repeated at intervals of time in celebrations, in anniversaries, and performed again, biographically affirming the content of the original action. The designating acts of the U.F.O.s are applied to every possible medium, to actions, drawings, to book objects and maps, to texts and installations

Beginning in 1970 (and up to the present), the figure of the author also steps out of the signature in the U.F.O. into a pictorial presence as U.F.O.naut J.K. "UNIVERSAL FUTUROLOGICAL ORIENTATION - THE PROCESS OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE HEAD (PORTRAIT) OF J.K. EXPRESSING A PERSONAL CULTURAL SITUATION. THE PHOTO-VISUALISATION WILL TAKE PLACE AT TIME (YEARLY) INTERVALS INTO THE FUTURE."

Koller, who himself was a practicing athlete, has always found a field of reference for his reality concepts in the regulations, the sequences of action and in the props of various types of sports. In the "Gallery of the Young" in Bratislava in 1970, instead of an exhibition, Koller set up a ping-pong club for one month, where visitors could play. Like other demonstrative moments of the work, such as manually inscribing a question mark in the sand field of a tennis court a year earlier and working with chalk, and the line marking wagon (Contact, 1969), this act of transformation was not intended to be passive representation, but rather an active one, triggering an existential movement – a momentary existential creativity that expresses itself in a cultural situation.

In addition to this opting for action, Koller also finds here a formal reference to the motif of sequencing, the serial, the possibility of structural connection: the grid structure of the strings of a tennis racket, the tennis net (the mediator, the middle, the medium of the game, knotted into a serial, non-hierarchical structure) and fishing nets become permanent props in the U.F.O. stock. After 1972 until into the 80s, however, Koller interrupted this work with set pieces. Their imminent suggestion of fairness and the abstract rules of relationships, for which sports stand, seemed unsuitable to him. Around 1972, the emphasis on formulas like "new life" and "new creativity" vanished altogether. Koller focused on the motif of isolation again – in times of normalization, which socially isolates one but also compels conformity. In this way, Koller indirectly asserted that art as an effective counterforce against the society of the so-called "normalization years" had per se become superfluous.

## Umečie

The Pingpong Monument (1970-72) could be a metaphor for the reality of the normalization years. In this photo collage, Koller's hand stretches out holding a tennis racket monumentally before the silhouette of a modernist satellite city, as though the Black Hole that the form of the racket delineates were announcing the lacuna following the Congress of the Association of Slovakian Fine Artists (ZSVJ) of November 1972, where a number of art practices were prohibited and where the *de facto* re-establishment of the socialist realism of the 50s took place. Koller's re-decoration of the Slovakian wooden houses with question marks in a photo collage in 1978 – through which a touristic national symbol of Czechoslovakia of the 70s became a Universal Polioresonant Object – is a direct reaction. And it reacts again with a performative act. During these years, symbols of eternity appear more and more often in the text works, along with question marks and the negation NIE (juristic art becomes Umečie or nevemore). Endless bands of Möbius strips, round, pressed into loops or triangles, spirals and ying-yangs present U.F.O. even more explicitly as an operation of designation turning back on to itself. Combined with the Bermuda Triangle and the Ufo idea of an all-consuming and extra-terrestrially cleansed space, Koller then employs the idea of Atlantis for the first time. Performative balancing acts were performed during this period, demonstrations, the "levelings", in which Koller subordinated himself to the scale of measurement markings on houses in the old city of Bratislava, for example, or delimited a zebra crossing with traffic huts to an anti-picture. A child and the artist stand on a hill in front of a school in Bratislava, with their hands spread as though ready to fly like some poetic Anti-Icaruses. Koller draws the logbook of his expedition from a sand pile in the new housing area near the Danube – and thus near the Iron Curtain – in which he lives, on a sandy hill near the border along the river, already under permanent surveillance by the border guards.

Naturally, the establishment of such a branching system of order suggests ascribing a mythologizing function to Koller's meticulous designations, his categorizations. And in fact it is not uncommon that Koller's work is simply assigned to the genre designation "individual mythologies", the metonymic, often escapist tendency of art in the 70s. An escapism into self-enclosure against the real situation experienced as the evils of history or the evils of politics in periods of normalization is not uncommon in the art of the European avant-gardes from the Soviet sphere of the 70s. The mythologization of one's own existence and the decontextualization of one's own work, the creation of parallel universes, became a possible strategy of resistance against totalitarian oppression. "Not by striving for the quality of the absolute, it became an a-historical construct."

For Julius Koller, though, it was not a matter of his work transposing the local circumstances perceived as limiting, or of creating a dissident identity by appropriating the values of the western avant-garde. His compensation for the traumatic historical experience of being closed in found another, adequate expression in his biography: he was a teacher of painting at an art school for hobby painters. In this way, too, one's own work can be defined as discontinuous with the local traditions of modernity and modernism!

## Art History as Blümish

Just as so much of the art of the late 60s and early 70s did not fit to the categories provided by the canon, Julius Koller's work must also be reinterpreted from today's perspective. The established critical categories that were developed around Post-Minimalism, Concept Art, Land Art and Process Art are hardly suitable to it. Nor did the major exhibitions for the integration of western European art into pan-European modern art history, in which Koller's work was present, fill this lacuna with new ideas for



Julian Noller UFOs and / UFOs 1999

interpretation. The mappings of non-American conceptualists or performance artists, which began in the USA in the second half of the 1960s, were too unspecific in their methodical approaches to be able to propose essential re-evaluations. An additional complicating factor is that Koller's work in the euphoric years of the Prague Spring and the "leader years" of normalization afterwards remained hidden - for reasons of local intolerance - even to the foremost of Czechoslovakian art critics, such as Jindřich Chalupecký from Prague. For this reason, as early as 1991 in the catalogue essay for Koller's exhibition at the Plovinsk Gallery in Žilina, with which the post-Communist rediscovery of Koller's work started, Auroš Hrabušický noted that in reference to Koller's multilayered pieces, one could not speak of pure conceptualism, but rather of a contextual, broken aesthetic process interwoven with manifold references, for which hardly a counterpart could be found on either side of the former Iron Curtain.

Koller's use of the universal as metaphor for the real, his skipping over the local ideologues, the local variations of universalist Gestalt figures of late modernism, such as corporeal happening, abstract painting, kinetism and geometric abstraction, were rooted in an idea of the transparency of the aesthetic act as pure event. In a brief period of collaboration with Peter Rónai from the next younger generation after the fall of the wall, which Koller called "New Earnestness", Koller said explicitly that the reference space of the sign must be maintained and opposed the postmodern simulation theory. By appealing to the transparency of the performative act, and to a simple possibility of transformation, as in ping-pong tournaments, for example, or other sports works, Koller explored - not unlike artists of his generation in the 60s from the other side of the divided world - the possibilities of a radical transformation of the idea of the work away from the object towards the trace of an action or an instruction for action. Just as radically as his colleagues working conceptually or minimally in New York or Los Angeles, Koller casts doubt on the idea of a privileged standpoint of the traditional categories of fine art. The works from the mid-1960s on, the anti-pictures, the text-scores or the U.F.O.s in the early seventies newly defined the aesthetic experience as a multitude of non-specialized forms for approaching the question: What is really and authentically "modern"? How can the idea - or even just the melanc - of authenticity be transferred to a new construction of the relations between author, work and observer? Must one take a detour by way of the transient, provisional, arbitrary, in order to newly define this relation?

After 1972, Koller's works seem more melancholy. Yet they still create very rigorous situations. If we disregard all the questions regarding the concrete scope of action in Czechoslovakia of the second half of the seventies and attempt to focus on the ideology-critical aspects of the U.F.O. acts and anti-facts, we recognize that Koller's work manifests a direct reference to the empty opposite of dialectical teleology, which is inscribed in a large portion of the Marxist tradition. The U.F.O.s name the unresolved contradiction between an objective "determinacy" and revolutionary activism. Losing trust in the possibility of revolution also means taking leave of the idea of living in historical conditions that evince a potential for change.

For the artist Koller, the analysis of what exists constantly also suggests something explosive. The performative, designating acts and the overflowing yet always coherent system of designation in his actions are always a silent reproach against the strategies, from which everyday life in the "leader years" grows. They reveal the arbitrariness of the dominant order. They pose the question of a liberating perspective. Koller's analysis of the everyday is conducted through a three-fold movement similar to the way the French theoretician Henri Lefebvre depicts the model for the emancipatory appropriation of space through everyday practices: first socialization is accomplished in the form of a "totalization of society". At the same time, this process is accompanied by an "extreme individualization", which ultimately leads to a "particularization".

Koller's ostensible fictions leave the conventional genres of illusionist representation and refer back to the production and representation process, which exists in the present in the reality of the designated moment. As bizarre and clownesque as the actions may sometimes seem, an immediate image of the present emerges in all of them, which contains all the force of differentiation. Koller never operates within the framework of so-called "major" themes in relation to the body: pain, sexuality, death, injury, wounding, mental borderline situations of surrender. Instead, Koller operates within the constraints of everyday schemata of control and order. In this way, he unmask the imperative that art is there to decipher a deeper truth about us and our bodies and our culture, replacing it with a performative act: engagement instead of arrangement.

# I Could Hear the Taste of Honey

Chris Mills

*Such are the two ways of the Photograph: The choice is mine: to subject its spectacle to the civilized code of perfect illusions, or to confront it in the waking of intractable reality*

Roland Barthes

*Valuable things may be lying around, but nobody remembers where*

Walter Benjamin

## PART ONE: Polo and Honey



The illustration in my mind begins with a photograph, and actually, more precisely, with a memory of a photograph. The image is one that embodies for me a certain sympathy that I always held for my father, a man who had had polo—an arcane and dusty melody in my childhood mind. Polo was summed up for me in one persistent image: a small boy—chubby, ruddy, grinning—in a type of suit known as a “little Lord Fauntleroy.” It is clear in the black and white photograph that the suit is velvet, and always in my color mind, it is purple. I thought this to be one of the youngest infant images of my father. The striking thing about the boy is the gait, unwieldy brace that encase his legs and his thick, awkward orthopedic shoes together with crutches that he leans on, for all the world a 1900’s version of Dickens’ Tiny Tim. Often, when arguing with my father—an implacable police officer—that image would spring to mind and I would capitulate to his viewpoint—in possession of a certain, protective love—hoping that the small victory would help ease any scars from his childhood ailment.

I have been unable to locate that photograph and finally asked my mother where she thought it might be. “The picture of dad in a little Lord Fauntleroy suit and leg-braces? Dad?” - she is tall with a smoky laugh. It seems that my father was in his twenties when he contracted polo; my mother was pregnant with my older sister. My dad was laid off from his job the day after he was diagnosed. The concerns of his illness were adult concerns. My father had no leg braces, no crutches, he has a similar smile to the child in the photograph, though, and it was prominent when I told him the story. “When I got polo, I didn’t even own a suit” he is tall also and his laugh is rich tenor. The photograph? It was an image of a distant cousin, borrowed by my mother with no concern for the crutches or the grin. She had borrowed it to show a neighborhood seamstress exactly what a little Lord Fauntleroy suit was, in order to commission one for my brother. The suit was never made (too expensive) and the photograph was never returned, remains somewhere, probably in a box, exact location unknown.



Vivian Maier (left) and Richard Howard (right) in a scene from the film *Maier*

The title of this paper is drawn from a quote by the incredible food writer and chef, Madhur Jaffrey, in an article mostly about food and memory and to a lesser degree about musical performance. She describes how, right after her birth, her grandmother wrote "Om" ("I am" in Sanskrit) memory of this incredible act begins (she believes) her love affair with food. She writes also about her husband, a violinist, and a question posed to him about reading music from a page "Can you hear the music in your head?" Within Jaffrey's extended explanation is the idea that both cooking and performing are comprised of a subjective emulation of sense memory, repetition and rehearsal. So goes the process of discovery and realization and the individual act of learning is thus: we hear what is available, but remember what is sweet. Questions like these involve a particular attention to the process combining the registers of memory and sight—with a difference between the memory we manufacture (seeming to play a song on a violin) and the unbidden or surprise memory (a flash of childhood)—for within the registers of memory are also structuring elements for the way in which we can imagine, understand or even see the future. Memory frequently affects our methods of categorizing and framing information. As Nietzsche says, in a statement whose veracity has increased with neurological knowledge: "Our eye finds it more comfortable to respond to a given stimulus by reproducing once more an image that it has reproduced many times before, instead of registering what is different and new in an impression", so we can appreciate the necessary truth that the ways in which we see create habits of mind as well as memories.

Memory's visionary labor, however, is troubled or even destroyed in the face of photographic reproduction. Part of the pressure of the photograph is the way in which psychic life becomes intertwined with it. In photographs of people or events we have witnessed or known, the photo-

graph is test-a-control group for the experiment of remembrance: it is the object against which we measure memory's efficacy. In instances where we have not been present, it is the trace of the recollection of another: someone else's knowing, a marked instance of our consciousness coming into contact with the material consciousness of another. Both of these situations—quizzing ourselves, facing the evidence of another—can result in a kind of intellectual discomfort.

An event is often revised and condensed—patch-worked to become comprehensible and remembered, in a process similar to the dream's interpretation that Freud outlines. Ideas of revision and condensation in our waking lives, however, are complicated by the fact that the photograph is that which quizzes and presents, especially in concerning photographs of performance. The photograph is intrinsically incomplete, its energies are motivated by a desire to go further, to, in a sense, accessories, we fill in the blanks to produce meaning. What we compose around the photograph, the techniques of extension and extrapolation (into memory, time, or imagined space), seem an exceptional act within our lives' process, it is one in which we take an intellectual slice and labor to make it whole—whether in sparking our own memory or trying to appreciate the experience of another. To consider the photograph in a vacuum is akin to dehydrating a peach and serving it whole, without understanding that the shriveled thing is made luscious only through remembrance and rehydration. In this light, the photograph drawn from a moment of performance is both partial and active: its unfinished nature holds the viewer as the inchpin of resolution, asking us to fill in what we know about time, about the group in question or about performance itself.

I would like to suggest that it is because we don't want to be reminded of our limitations, whether of memory or experience that the photograph has held a tenuous and conflicted position since its inception; this discomfort spurs the broad and vehement range of writing on the photograph. Whether in support or dismissal, so much of the writing on photography presents it as the savior or destruction of art, black and white, if you will, with very little grey. There are quotes that liken the photograph to black magic: "Vanish acquaintances and misanthropes-as chimneys that consume your own smoke, devour yourselves. There is an end of your black art...The real black art of true magic arises and cries: 'Assault!'". Or as a kind of transcendental theft: Balzac's misanthrope fear of the photograph came from a belief that all physical bodies are made up of layers and layers of transparent selves—an infinite number of hellish skins layered one on top of the other; he thought that every time his photograph was taken one of these spectral layers was removed, and that repeated exposure would result in the removal of the very essence of life. Barthes' assertion, in *Camera Lucida*, that "whether or not the subject is dead, every photograph is a catastrophe".

Or, lastly, in a clear trajectory from embryo to demise: Paul Delacroix, around 1839, right after the photograph's invention, writes: "From today,

<sup>1</sup> The story appears in a sidebar article entitled "Sweet Memory" in the August 19 & 26, 2002 New Yorker issue dedicated to food.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Jonathan Gray's *Techniques of the Observer* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998) p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> Frequently quoted, this excerpt originates in The Corcoran: *A Gazette of Literature, Art, Dramatic Criticism, Fashion and Novelty* (New-York) Vol. 1 No. 5 (Saturday, 13 April 1838) pp. 70-72.

<sup>4</sup> Barthes, *Roller, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: The Noonday Press, 1981).

painting is dead?"<sup>6</sup> This quote followed a century and a half later by WJT Mitchell's assertion that, "from the moment of its sesquicentennial in 1989, photography was dead."<sup>7</sup> A short life, really, for an art form that has extracted bombast and polemic from its writers, even as its imperfections flashed, literally, in front of their eyes.

## PART TWO: Motion and Emulsion



Matthew Gaulty, *Draw Some and Make a Jelly*. Goat Island's New Deal to Me the Near When Daylight Dies

There is a way in which the presentation of the body—especially in front of a series of other bodies—gives a certain pause. It is, of course, the thing we know and also the enigmatic. Terms of comparison—metaphor, metonymy, index, map—all function as description but without the fullness of relation that is actually conjured when we see the us/not us before our eyes. Parallel to the question for the musician ("can you hear the music in your head?") is the question that the translation of stage activity conjures within our observer's bodies: "can you feel the movement in your head?" Wild enough when it is something refined like classical ballet, but even more enervating when we see performers doing things on stage that resemble the forms and outline of movement with which we are somatically familiar. Watching dance performances by Yvonne Rainer or Steve Paxton exploring the notion of the neutral doer or the everyday action, and the level of comfortable discomfort redoubles. The doing of tasks is still charged with a certain electricity when presented as spectacle. I recently saw a 40 year anniversary performance of Yvonne Rainer's *Three*. Sessopics, and it was difficult to associate that body with my body, even though the vernacular moves of the dance were all "available" to me! There is a twitchy relation between the still, watching body and the moving one onstage. What happens to this kinetic assemblage made of parts that we recognize so well when it is cap-

tured, moment by moment, on film? The almost-misrecognition of the body is still present, but the question of memory shifts: increasing the layers of relation, but also allowing the action a different place within the perceptual field. In the fastened reconstruction of the body, thought can linger over image: the "freeze" opens a space for contemplation that may have been previously denied.

In deeply movement-oriented performance like Chicago-based performance group Goat Island's, the physical, laboring presence of the bodies is difficult to realize while sitting still in your seat. This exertion is often paired with narratives of physical anomaly. A kind of corporeal incapacitation continues to haunt their work as references to the World's Fastest Man, the Incredible Shrinking Man, or the body dying from poison appear, even as the performers themselves push their bodies beyond any comfortable range of activity. They speak to us of somatic de-formation even as their bodies jump and drop and heave and sweat before us, engendering a potential sympathy for both their bodies and their stories.

In Roger Fry's 1909 "An Essay in Aesthetics" he outlines of double life of humans, in which they both live and think, producing as he says, the actual life and the imaginary life. The beauty of the bifurcation, for him, is in the ability to replay events in the mind's eye. He uses the new form of the moving picture, or cinematograph to

explain: "If, in a cinematograph, we see a run-away horse and cart, we do not have to think about getting out of the way or heroically interposing ourselves. The result is that...we see the event much more clearly, we see a number of quite interesting and irrelevant things, which in real life could not struggle to our consciousness.... In the imaginative life, no such action is necessary and, therefore, the whole consciousness may be focused upon the perceptive and emotional aspects of the experience. In this way, we get, in the imaginative life, a different set of values, and a different kind of perception."<sup>8</sup> Similar to the troubles with separating out the aspects of a taste in a taste, so here we can see the difficulty in ascertaining what we see from what we feel. In this material space, the photograph can provide a different kind of perception.

It, in 1918, Allen Coburn declared photography "test-seeing", I would like to suggest, in 2002, that it also offers "slow looking." The photograph, like the internet-readied corpse, is still and chemically fixed, and it is precisely this fixity which offers a possibility of comprehending movement movement as a multivalent one of body, thought and time. We can see a link emerging between a psychic process and the bounded square of the photograph. In the words of Rosalind Krauss

Barthes, in particular, was further interested in the structural irony that would allow photography,

<sup>6</sup> Brian Stephens, *Paul Delanoe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 1207.

<sup>7</sup> Mitchell, William J. *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds. *Art in Theory: 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 80.

this wrecker of unity being, to perform the semological sleight-of-hand whereby in the seamlessness of its physical surface the photograph seemed to summon forth the great guarantor of unity-law nature in all its presumed wholeness and continuity-to cover the tracks of photography's own ostensible operations.<sup>8</sup>

The surface of the photograph-its easy seamlessness to camouflage both its means of production as well as the detail and presence that is lost in its emblematic existence. This is the described work of the photograph: is there a strategic or generative use of the photograph in which a viewer begins to understand the emblematic nature see past the apparatus-concealing product? A viewer who charts a path, or a set of possibilities, rather than seeking a documentary moment alleged to be exhaustive. The term ostensible operations here is key, we of course understand and readily accept the ostensible process of textual presentation-never imagining that the citation from a book is anything more than perhaps a representational facet of its argument. Why not imagine the same for the snapshot? When looking at a frozen moment of the demanding physicality of GI in a photograph, the experience of activity has shifted. No longer compelled by the exertion so absolutely present in the room, there is a possible liberation of viewing-thought to traverse new ground of consideration. The ostensible practice of the photograph offers a contemplative object from which we are free to imagine a host of real and fictive options.

### PART THREE: Not Waving but Drowning



Hippolyte Bayard's Portrait of the Artist as a Drowned Man 1839

Walter Benjamin writes about the fog that surrounds the invention of the photograph and perhaps this is a heuristic to understand the medium itself, for we have flashes of writings and invention that surface from the beginning of the 19th century (resonant with Foucault's description of extant traces of the desire for an invention which often precede the invention itself); these flashes develop into a single unified image that can be named the history of photography. These flashes of knowledge are the snapshots that the past

leaves behind for the future to figure, making meaning by creating narrative.

Entitled Self-Portrait as a Drowned Man, and, literally, inscribed with its own narrative, there exists a series of self-portraits of Hippolyte Bayard. The invention of photography is usually settled in 1839, when publicly announced by the French government in relation to Daguerre and Bayard's photograph is dated 1840. It is interesting in the first its because it is, as Michael Saper names it, an impossible photograph<sup>9</sup>, in the way that any work of art created after death must be. Adding to its interest is the suicide note found on the back, which reads:

*The corpse which you see here is that of M. Bayard, inventor of the process that has just been shown to you, or the wonderful results of which you will soon see. As far as I know, this inventive and indelible experimenter has been occupied for about three years with the perfection of his discovery.*

*The Academy, the King, and all those who have seen his pictures admired them as you do at the very moment, although he himself considers them still imperfect. This has brought him much honor but not a single sou. The Government, which has supported M. Daguerre more than a necessary, declared itself unable to do anything for M. Bayard, and the unhappy man threw himself into the water in despair. Oh, human fickleness! For a long time artists, scientists and the press took an interest in him, but now that he has been lying in the Morgue for days, no-one has recognized him or claimed him!*

*Ladies and gentlemen, let's talk of something else so that your sense of smell is not upset, for as you have probably noticed, the face and hands have already started to decompose.*

Bayard's distress is understandable. The French government had not recognized the photographic work that he was doing and insult to injury, it will be William Fox Talbot who gets credited for process with which that Bayard is associated, a photographic process that works with paper, as opposed to the tripes that are created by Daguerre. One of the problems with the prints that both Talbot and Bayard were creating is that the porosity of the paper made the fixity of the image much less concrete, causing these paper reproductions to fade, ghost and disappear. Inherent in this is an indication that it is, has always been, the longevity of the image more than verification-archival interest rather than proof-that carries the weight of desire. Bayard and Fox Talbot could catch the moment, but only Daguerre could make it last and this, of course, is what the government wanted to fund and disseminate.

But its the last sentence of this note that carries the import: the photograph shows the field-work surten on Bayard's face and hands, but in his note, he renames this lingering "decomposition". What we can see here is an imagined or fictitious spectral performance, in which Bayard swaps the marker of his physical labor for a metaphorical marker of decay in the move, has darkened flesh

<sup>8</sup> B. Krauss "Rethinking the Medium" Critical Inquiry 25.2 (1999): 289-304

<sup>9</sup> Michael Saper "The Impossible Photograph: Hippolyte Bayard's Self-Portrait as a Drowned Man"



bin function as a stand-in for the development of photography itself (the darkness of the dark-room made flesh) and as a kind of mourning for the drop out of his work in the eyes of the public. The "decomposition" of his body, due to having not been claimed, is a testament to the public of what they have not been able to see, namely both Bayard and the rhetorical demise of Bayard as a photographer under their initiative eyes. Like the performers in Goat Island who speak of the body in distress, even as they coquette with health, Bayard requests an audience to take notice of that which has been ignored or forgotten, asks the viewer to read a metaphoric performance.

If we factor in the notion of the extremely popular toy of the time, a thaumatrope (wonder turner), in which a small round disk, with images on both sides was flipped or spun to create a single image (one side with a bird, the other with a cage, when spun, it produces a bird in a cage, or a horse on a road, or a man in jail), we can see Bayard's presentation of his dead self as ghosted by his presentation of the rationale for his demise. If we understand that the thaumatrope, first produced in England in 1825, was thought of as a "philosophical toy", in which the hallucinatory aspects of its use were considered an everyday interaction with the scientific, the resonance with Bayard's photograph and its written reason seems clear. Like the image which remains on the retina even after the image is removed, Bayard's explanation either introduces his image or follows it, his note calls the image something "has just been shown to you, or which you will soon see" as an inherent framing device in which his philosophical idea ghosts his physical product. Here Bayard's "imaginative life" creates and documents as a form of "real" life. Bayard performs and explicates his performance in one move creating one of the first moments of performance documentation and/or performative reading (manufacturing an object with its own hermeneutic) so that all of this, even in 1840, when photography is still an infant, is in the service of documentation for a fiction with a performative heart.

*From Lucky Pierre. "Fear is of a particular thing  
Dread is of nothing. And description is just  
description. That's all I can think of. My name is  
Wyatt Earp"*

*So, now we have the full story, or at least the  
complete script*

Geoffrey Batchen

Like Bayard, stretching himself out like David's Death of Marat, we share the need to image ourselves for the future; products of our time, we try to freeze it for tomorrow. Continuing to produce and re-produce ourselves as the subjects of a cartographic impulse. Another Chicago-based performance group, Lucky Pierre's 1998 performance, *I (Re)Mained Wyatt Earp* is an evocative exploration of the idea of the "American West" and its historical contextualization, questioning how we place and measure memory and event. It is also an engaging and entertaining performance, and quite moving at times. From the toy stagecoach that is pulled across the stage by a string, to a toy train that wheezes along its track, to the shout from one end of the stage that is repeated at the other ("the telegraph line's been cut"), the performance continues with a growing sense of urgency, accentuated by the constant "click, click, click" of Morse code as punctuation to remind us of the growing compartmentalization and naming of history.

One of the most astonishing images in this production comes near to the end, a card table, upon which two large pails of dirt have been dumped, on a stage gone quiet and dark. Two performers sit across from each other and set off firecrackers in the dirt as the only light in the room becomes a perfectly-centered, gridled illumination shining on the weight of the soil on the table. This is a powerful and layered moment of metaphor: Descartes' grid, the Homestead Act, the railroad lines, the pouring out of time on the

#### PART FOUR, the last: The Evanescent Map



Voice Ceremony and Noah Loringburg



body and the land. Watching the perfectly panned light play over the arms of the actors, as well as the recently deceased not, it is as though Lucky Pierre has provided an emblematic image for the entire performance. This grid, though, is also one of the most powerful aspects of the modernist imagination—an art historical attempt to nullify the narrative of history, the abstract and the geometric become powerful markers of a time that is not tied to tradition or convention but rather to an almost scientific reliance on experimentation. And all of this is in that moment as well, but it is a moment that I did not work out until after, when looking at the documentation in a photograph. While I was watching Lucky Pierre perform, what I got was a sense of this idea: an aesthetic pleasure washed over me and I could feel the depth and weight of a polysemic moment with many layers of intention and fulfillment—but it was the actual slight weight of the photograph in my hand that assisted in the crystallization of the idea. It was, as Wordsworth says of the *Romantics*, “emotion recollected in tranquility.”

Equivalent to a memory of a taste, a memory of a performance is often difficult to map. With taste, there is the sweet and the sour in delicate and often delicious conflict; the bitter plays alongside a multitude of spicy possibility, all four often tumbling together in a single caramelized or stewed or sautéed or roasted mouthful, overwhelming the senses that have gathered together to anticipate and then appreciate the work of the cook. In a performance, the play of the bodies, space, movement, sound, like the elements of a taste, all come together in a palate/palette of moving image. The difficulty in these examples is one of almost overstimulation, like the moment of trauma, in which our sensorial abilities

are besieged. There is the crush of an excess of information, resulting in the necessary work of post-event reconstruction in order to actually unwind the intricacies of the moment. If the ongoing and burgeoning work of trauma studies tells us anything, it is that a traumatic event, in its happening, is unknowable. Incomprehensibility in the traumatic moment is imbued also with violence or deep distress, which contributes to the riddle. While I am not attempting to inviolate a moment of traumatic loss or the psychic inability to take in tragedy, I am also interested in somatic incapacity resulting from over-stimulation (here not tinged with disaster, but delight) that results in at least a momentary inoperability. The methods of coping with the over-load seem related in both memory's power of reconstruction and in the necessity for some external trigger (for us, now, the photograph) as a means of beginning to recollect.

One of the difficulties with documentation is the desire to distill the absolute essence of a performance. We long for a single second that is adequate to tell the tale so that the future (like the past that we so desperately try to read) will find our work available. The liveliness debate in performance studies has taught us not to expect a moving body to be fully understood after the fact, but there is still an aspiration to catch the iconic or a flash of the fleeting—a gesture, a glance, a frozen blur—as we try to safeguard our actions for the future.<sup>18</sup> But is this the way we should proceed? Because the photograph has both reached a rarified space of High Art and begun (now that scholars like Mitchell have pronounced it dead) to be a less necessary requirement for the work of documentation—with video and all forms of digitality expanding that role

could we consider a new use for the flat, still and bounded photograph? Can we see the photograph, like a kind of sheet music, as a spur to produce something new?

My constructed memory of my polo-affected father, like Madhur Jaffrey's remembrance of her sweetened infantile tongue, expanded a space of love. This space did not disappear, or even shrink, when I came to find that it was a mistaken construction. It seems to me that documentation is less motivated by scientific specificity, and more by the requirements of emotion. Often, when we seek out a photograph, especially of a performance, instead of a precise autopsy of a moment, we pursue a flavor. The photograph (in its abbreviations), more than the video or digitized recording of an event, releases the bonds of intellect to a place of interaction. Video often makes a performance look worse than it is, small or in some way and less complex. Perhaps because it captures movement, including a sense of the temporal, video seduces us to believe that we can somehow relive the past, only to have the flattening of that belief surprise us again and again.

I would like to show you the Lucky Pierre photograph of the gilded table—the one that opened up the philosophy of that performance to me. I'd like to show you that alongside the image that I believed was of my ailing, polo-affected father, but like Berthe's photograph of his mother in *Clemens Lucidia*, those images aren't available to anyone but me. In their stead, I offer you the narrative that comes after the photograph's performance remembering, with hope, that every story, remain somehow incomplete.

<sup>18</sup> The classic references for this debate are Peggy Phelan's *Unmarked* (London: Routledge, 1993) and Philip Auslander's *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999). Phelan revisits the subject, dealing with the photograph specifically in *Art and Feminism* (Phaidon, 2001).



# Nearness

A 42 minute response to 12 hour Evangeline Part 3: Near  
by Lucky Pierre with Ribbon Effect

Matthew Goulsh

He imagined life in two parts: Part One, Learning, to the age of forty: those years he did nothing but read a book so large it did not fit in the house. It lay in the back yard, on the spot where his father had assembled a Sears monkey-bar set. At night he looked out the window and imagined the book there. He read one page per day, crawling down it on his hands and knees. It taught him names of trees, of fish in the ocean, of state capitals, of stars in the night sky and their constellations, languages of nations, causes and preventions of war, famines, damage to children, forms of confusion, intricacies of repair, words to say to the bereaved. He retained everything he read, finishing on his fortieth birthday. On that day he turned over the last page, turned his back on the book, and unceremoniously walked away, to begin Life Part Two.

## Part One

A man sits at a table. He speaks into a microphone. He invents half words and broken phrases. He is repeating. A film plays silently on a 12" TV screen behind him, mounted seven feet above the floor in a hole in a long chalkboard. Easy Rider. He must hear the soundtrack on his headset, because at times his disjointed speech sounds Easy Riderlike, at times it roughly echoes the actors' mouth shapes. At those points, the words come into focus, they "make sense," they make an example of what sense is: an echo. "Can you take me and my friend over cross the canyon?" says the screen. "Can you. My friend. Cross the canyon," says the man.

George Oppen wrote a poem in 1968. It was called OF BEING NUMEROUS, and this is the start:

There are things

We live among "and to see them

is to know ourselves"

it is March 24th, 2001. I have prepared for this day. It is the day of **Near**, the third and final 12-hour performance by Lucky Pierre in response to a poem Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote in 1847. We could call this a performance of sincerity. The poem was called EVANGELINE, and this is the start:

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks

I set out to write for a duration, to respond to a response. I set out to witness, and this is what appeared: Nearness, a talk in 42 fragments, each fragment a minute, each minute an echo.

By the time it ends at midnight, **Near** will have seen a parade of 39 volunteer performers, joining the ten Lucky Pierre members, seated at a long table onstage, repeating words and songs, at a table off-stage murmuring instructions to onstage walkie-talkies. In the heart of the city, unknown and unnoticed by commercial measure. Are we a crowd? Are we a human frame around a memory picture of a crowd? Those relationships express, not a contemplative or legislative distance, but a proximity that is nearness. For sincerity is not so much a true account of one's inner feelings as an acceptance of what exceeds the self. A politics of encounter - not what it is (reduced to a meaning) but that it is. A pointing at it, as if to propose that what is in the room is in the room. We exist, and together. We make ourselves. I am because of that at which I point.



- 3 • I arrive at 1:15. **Near** has been underway for 75 minutes. This is my first thirty seconds. 1) Nothing is happening on stage. 2) Something is happening on stage, but not enough. 3) More is happening on stage than I can possibly take in, in grasping the details of one part of the stage. I miss what Iran spouts elsewhere. I will describe what I can. I look down to write. I look up to see the object of my description changed. I miss both what I miss and what I look at. For now I describe incompletely. This is my start. A man sits at a table.
- 4 • At 10:30, I write the following. A man sits at a table. He reads off a postcard. He does not know that 3 hours ago another man sat in the same place and read the same words off the same postcard. Greetings from Detroit, he says. A blue car driving away from the hills, he says. He does not consider himself a repetition. [count to 12 in silence]
- 5 • I write this at 10:30. A man opens the fire escape door to let in the cool air. We are in a small loft space on the 2nd floor of 2003 West Fulton Street, corner of Damen Avenue. Chicago, one block north of Lake Street, above which the Green Line elevated tracks run. In a moment a train will rattle past. It has become night, and it is Saturday. The train will be only two cars long. It will have a few people scattered in each car. After a while this will happen again. How a work amounts to an effect. How the effect exceeds the material totality of the body. How I have lost the sources of my quotations. How I feel ready to conclude.
- 6 • Forest #1: the things we live among. The chalkboard, 24' long by 12' high, cuts a diagonal across the northeast corner of the playing area. Three TV screens perch in three TV-shaped holes cut in the chalkboard. The first plays *Easy Rider*. The second plays the silent movie version of *Evangelina*, starring Dolores del Río. The third, somewhat removed from the other two, plays *Easy Rider* video stills. A fourth television, an old 8" to 8 1/2" w., hangs suspended from the ceiling at the chalkboard's end. It plays a live feed, amplified through the sound system, of a three-person band in a brightly lit sound studio somewhere playing low music.
- 7 • Silent *Evangelina* ends. Two people have covered the chalkboard with words, now erased. A man takes his place at a small table, adjusts a microphone. Guitar in hand, he starts teaching the audience *Big River* by Johnny Cash. An assistant has distributed lyric sheets. It is 2:00. I have not yet finished with 1:15, when I arrived, found my designated writing desk beside the fire escape, and poured a cup from my thermos of coffee. **Near** had been underway for 75 minutes. Here is some of what I missed.

- 6 • Do you have tickets to this thing?

No.

Would you look at the image on the monitor and describe what you see?

uh  
magnolia blossoms  
heat of noon  
cane of a cedar  
swift humming birds  
regions celestial  
water

Describe the image you see now.

measureless prairie  
silvery haze  
fire flies  
stars  
blazing comet

Anything else?

Michigan forests  
Saginaw river

Lakes of St. Lawrence

secluded hamlets

towns and populous cities

Uh... what's this? I mean is this really your hair?

No. I mean really what is this?

Are you a freak?

You're a freak, aren't you?

Can you take me and my friend across the canyon?

At 2:05 the New Orleans of Big River echoes the New Orleans of Easy Rider - Peter Fonda walking through Mardi Gras. The teacher ends the lesson, having led the fifteen audience members in a raucous rendition. He paused once to correct our pronunciation ("Saint Louis, not Saint Louis, please, in this song the s is silent"). In the silence after the song, a new voice emerges: a man who must have replaced the first man at the long table, speaking Easy Rider in a low voice that must have been there below Big River. That is a step that can be seen to be time.

+ 9

It is 2:20. Near proceeds as a tissue of transitions, events of quotation, aligning in a series of controlled accidents. On the small b & w tv, the musicians put down their instruments. It seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music. Two performers step up and remove a piece of the chalkboard: doorlike, from directly below the b & w tv. The three musicians come walking out of the hole. The brightly lit sound studio, it turns out, is behind the chalkboard. The band exits by entering. Once on stage, they take a break.

+ 10

I went to live in that number, when the saints. One thing I didn't use to do is talk to bullfrogs. Two lines down through the landscape. Dennis Hopper finding without searching, ecstatic, paranoid. Evangeline, depressive, searching without finding. One talks to bullfrogs, at home everywhere, one drifts in a boat, homeless. Soon Woodstock will start where Easy Rider was. A man stands on a red wheeled ladder. A woman pushes him along as he writes at the top of the chalkboard. He holds a walkie-talkie. A voice from some other room dictates. He says, "Ok. ok. yes." His writing, when legible, suggests he receives descriptions of the still images from Woodstock now on the third TV. He chalks one 24" long line, then trades places with the woman. At each push at the start of a line, the ladder's wheels emit a tremendous squeak.

+ 11

If we began these three films at the same moment and let them run continuously, how long would they cannon last? That is, when would the three moments that converge now, converge in exactly this way again? Woodstock lasts 225 minutes, or  $5 \times 5 \times 3 \times 3$ . Evangeline lasts 72 minutes, or  $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 3$ . Easy Rider lasts 94 minutes, or  $2 \times 47$ . 47, a prime number, dramatically extends the canonical duration. Because of 47, the three-film cannon does not repeat until 84,600 minutes have passed. If we start these films together and let them run, they will start together again, repeating their exact harmonic relationship, 58 days and 18 hours later.

+ 12

## Part Two

This talk in three parts of 14 fragments each, now starts part two, in which I try to tell you a little of what, how, and why. A man takes his place at the smaller table. He opens a Macintosh laptop. As the stage lights dim, the computer lights his face the way computers light faces now in dark rooms, diffusely. He reads a section of Evangeline off the screen. Behind him the first TV restarts the silent Evangeline. We have moved with this performance that flows like birds that flock overlike in approximate shape, change direction, slight on wires, fly again, with no behavior to indicate what happened a moment ago. He reads. A twilight descending, pawing the ground.

+ 13

In a box of books in the basement of his parents' house he found a copy of Longfellow's epic poem, Evangeline, inscribed with his grandfather's name and 1914. That year his grandfather taught it to the children of farmers and loggers in a one-room schoolhouse in Stonestown, Pennsylvania. Early the following year, his grandfather beat a student so thoroughly that angry parents demanded his firing. In 1993 he rescued the book from the damp of his parents' basement and put it on his bookshelf in Chicago. A very pleasing object, old, musty, yellow, beautiful typography, he thought. He scanned it, but never bothered to read it.

+ 14

2

- 15 • In 1999 his group decided to create a 12-hour performance. Evangeline should be the foundation, he heard himself say. He still had not read it. He read it then, and summarized:
- Evangeline  
 young, beautiful, chaste  
 Acadian  
 lived in Grand-Pré with her father  
 happy  
 had a pure white cow  
 was to be wed to her childhood sweetheart, Gabriel  
 wedding interrupted by the British soldiers  
 watched town burn  
 forced into exile with the other villagers  
 watched father die of grief on the beach  
 got on a different boat than Gabriel  
 decided to search for Gabriel  
 floated down the Mississippi to Louisiana  
 found Gabriel's father, not Gabriel  
 wouldn't give up.  
 rode all over an imaginary American west looking
- 16 • imagined him wearing buckskin  
 looked for years.  
 had several near misses  
 spent a year waiting at a mission in the upper Midwest  
 kept hoping  
 met a nice Indian woman who told her of her dreams  
 gave up and moved to Philadelphia.  
 became a nun  
 got old  
 kept love in her heart  
 nursed sick and dying men  
 found Gabriel among the sick  
 kissed him  
 sang him a song.  
 he died
- After he read it, he told everyone in the group he liked it. He did not like it. He liked that he had read it. He liked the title. He liked the reaction of the rest of the group who tried not to hate it.
- 17 • *I heard the tick of his watch, which could not be far away. This tick changed place every moment, for I could not see the watch, it came from behind, from in front of me, from my right, from my left, sometimes to die away as though it were a long way off. Suddenly I caught sight of the watch on the table. Then I heard the tick in a fixed place from which it did not move again.*
- Context is a pest with a future. That is the sense of the phrase this is happening. That is what gives us a sense of reason. We are here, in this place, doing things. We have this in common. It is meaningful as that, as the place where we know each other and know we are together.
- 18 • They composed by reduction, stripping the "hooks", "grooves", "melodies", from the Woodstock songs, then regrowing on those distillation fields a music of parts unremembered, backgrounds unveiled, loss flowering seeds, more trailing mosses, an adventure of the moment, connected, continuous, trained. One cannot take a chance outside of time. To rewrite nostalgia, to witness with sound, a

Longfellow, considered a public poet, enjoyed tremendous popularity during his lifetime. His efforts at shaping a common social mythology for a youthful nation, to supersede old-world narratives, included the quasi-historical poems *Paul Revere's Ride*, *The Song of Hiawatha* and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. The 110-page *Evangeline*, used as a pedagogical tool, was memorized and recited by thousands of schoolchildren to internalize a collective cultural memory.

• 19

Because of the poem's enormous popularity, scholars began to claim that the story was true. Statues were erected in places where *Evangeline* lived, a monument in Philadelphia at the place she was "buried," fiction accepted as fact. Gradually, however, this collective memory diminished. Many now consider Longfellow a somewhat sentimental, mildly embarrassing second-tier American poet. While much of the mythology Longfellow created remains in America's social imagination, knowledge of *Evangeline*, the story and character, has nearly vanished. Tragedies are not without beauty. They bring us home.

• 20

*Bigness* Part One: 4:00 What is this rippling action in a circle of people if not touched with doubt? How can you catch the sparrow. Beyond a certain scale, a performance, architecturally conceived and assembled, acquires the properties of Bigness. It seems incredible that size alone may embody an ideology independent of the will of its creators. Clumsy, slow, inflexible, difficult, Bigness integrates a complexity that mobilizes the full intelligence of the art and its vast surrounding fields. Big duration, big cast, big chalkboard - and at a second generation - big materials: *Evangeline*, *Woodstock*, *Easy Rider* - American epics, extending limits, uncertainties contained.

• 21

On those evenings when, as we sat in the front house round the iron table beneath the big chestnut-trees, we heard, from the far end of the garden - the double ivy-leafed, oval golden, of the visitors' bell - "A visitor! Who in the world can it be?" But they knew quite well it could only be *Swann*.

• 22

The bell inaugurated my apprenticeship. What if it had not rung? Would another sound have taken its place? What is this but the fear of an unwell life?

*Woodstock's* first song: *Freedom*

Marching to the Concord War

Dunkirk War

Korean War

Birmingham War

What's the use of singing this song?

Tell me what it is we've got to do?

Wait for the birds?

I can almost hear the hydrogen bomb

Singing how sweet chariot, they say, it must be Joan Baez. *Evangeline* searches the crowd for Gabriel. The woman musician climbs to a platform above the table. She sits with her back to the audience. I can hear her writing on something - paper with a marker? The reader returns with his laptop, the lights fade. He gives a short informal lecture on the poem, context, content. He reads. Even the birds had built their nests in the scales of the balance, having no fear of the sword that flashed in the sunshine above them. The band has closed themselves in behind the chalkboard, and play again on twi. Say thank you to yourself for making this the most peaceful and pleasant day. I'm sure there's going to be a lot of belling. The audience on the screen is a massive crowd, but the audience in the room has dwindled to 5.

• 23

Boundlessness. Unlimited returns. Repetition unrepeated. Joe Cocker and the band behind the chalkboard start together. What could be more important than the next 10 minutes? For example, audience member number 6 just entered and sat in front of me wearing relatively strong synthetic cologne. Phenomenology moving into a social sphere. A fourth musician starts playing guitar at the lighting table behind me and to my left. He harmonizes with the band behind the board. Action, though it may proceed from nowhere, acts into a medium. Every reaction becomes a chain, every process a source. Move away from the towers. The smallest act in the most limited circumstance bears the seeds of the same boundlessness. NO RAIN. One word changes every constellation.

• 24



- 25 • Shapes that resemble other shapes. Material assembled uncreative from the non-self and organized. Each twig in the nest in the scales of justice. What is justice to a bird? Does not the soul have the weight of a feather? The art is in the event of the bird, not of the statue. Or could we say the statue is for the birds? Valueless art is limitless. On July 16, 1945, as the countdown at Alamogordo approached zero, the P.A. system began to broadcast music from a nearby radio station operating on the same frequency. This is how the explosion of the first atomic bomb came to be accompanied by a Tchaikovsky waltz.

- 26 • Bigness Part One. 4:00 Beyond a certain critical mass, such a piece can no longer be controlled by a single gesture or combination of gestures. This impossibility triggers the autonomy of its parts, but not fragmentation: the parts remain committed to the whole. Bigness thus defined is the opposite of the monumental which one could say is blandly redressed, ballooned beyond itself. A garden overgrows its plan. Each plant has several "wills of its own." This plucked music, this essence, this word by word.

You ever what want

to what you ever

what

want what to

what

be someone else?

The biggest book composes the smallest sensations — each gesture meticulously observed and full of doubt. I doubt that this, taken on its own, has any value. What we call our work, others call an approach. Maybe our gestures multiply because of their doubt, their own many qualities beyond "our" "control." They advance and recede in tides as crowds in a city at the changing times of the day.

### Part Three

- 27 • The band sets up 5 cd players around the small table. A performer reads a consecutive list of all the questions asked in *Easy Rider*.

Como esta?

Hey, you got a room?

You got a room?

You know what we oughta do, man?

What's the matter - you zoned?

What?

You're really zoned, right?

What is it?

A what?

Alright? George, what are you gonna do now?

3



Uh, what's this? I mean is this really your hair?

On three the band starts the CD players. The performer's voice multiplies, infusing a dialogue between him live and him recorded, reciting. At Jack Nicholson saying **BibbidiBibbidi what?** he repeats like a stuck record. The 5 CDs do the same, falling into phase with him, producing a momentary cacophony **BibbidiBibbidi what? BibbidiBibbidi what? BibbidiBibbidi what?**

The talk in three parts has started part three, in which I try to reconstruct Near from a distance by dividing and enumerating as follows: 1. Clearly activate and segregate, slowing each to generate its own line 2. Allow those lines to overlay, intersect, or run parallel to interweave a complex polyrhythm which 3. The audience must perceive slowly and in duration because of 4. The Bigness of the time envelope and distance traveled 5. Think of nearness as farness 6. Define spaces for performers 7. Define spaces for volunteers 8. Define a space for the audience 9. Think of these spaces as places 10. Allow community to appear 11. Ask: Is it possible to make a performance "about" distance? "about" community? "about" the search to experience them?

• 25

Longfellow's hermetic lines unwind to an end other than where they start. Paths are channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves

• 29

Line of chalkboard text  
Line of the red squeaky wheeled ladder  
Line of Evangeline's journey  
Imagined line of Gabriel's journey  
Line of Evangeline the movie on tv 1  
Line of Easy Rider the movie on tv 2  
Line of Easy Rider's journey  
Lines of Woodstock songs  
Line of the live music  
Line of the apprenticeship of this creative life

A performer invites an audience member on stage for an interview. Please complete the line: When I drive by an agricultural field I

Answer: don't even think about it

I often confuse the horizon with

Answer: the end of the day

Welcome once more my friends: who long have been friendless and homeless. The Evangeline laptop reader becomes metronomic, an hourly landmark. The audience comes and goes. Now I am alone except for cologne man, sitting directly in front of me. Two men double at the long table, each with headset and microphone, independent, repeating the same Woodstock. They cannot hear one another, or the audience, or themselves, and so speak in blank tones, overlapping. Observe the gaps. [count to 12 in silence]

• 30

We are committed to the problem we were born into. A woman with an India accent repeats Woodstock, having replaced the two men. Guitar man returns to teach Big River again. Try to do as well as the audience early this afternoon, he says. But don't make the same mistakes they made, saying Saint Louis instead of Saint Louis. The song rebuilds itself. She ends Woodstock Day One. Say thank you to yourselves. Big River sing-along ends. Applause. Quiet. Her voice revealed, just like before.

• 31

She speaks for Rev. Sherkar's face. The time has come for America to help the whole world with spirituality also - her imitation uncannily accurate, but she seems at a loss when the camp 50s retro band Sha Na Na launch into their thadinos. 8:45. Not only does translation imply transformation, but that transformation harbors a deep loss of all the originary resonances and perceptions of place which remain unreplicable. What if we look at the frame and not the picture? To grab what would have floated away and make it concrete. To preserve the disappearances, A man keeps from the audience with a spray-can of WD40 and lubricates the ladder which, after 9 hours, stops squeaking

• 32

- 33 • The attraction of a journey lies in its making the difference between departure and arrival as intense as possible, so that we are conscious of it in its totality: intact, as it existed in us when our imagination bore us from the place in which we were hung right to the very heart of a place we longed to see, in a single sweep which seemed miraculous to us not so much because it covered a certain distance as because it united two distinct individualities of the world, took us from one name to another
- 34 • Bigness Part 2: The distance between core and envelope increases, façade cannot reveal interior. The humanist expectation of "honesty" is doomed. Where structure reveals, Bigness perplexes, a summation of certainties becomes an accumulation of mysteries. Bigness questions the possibility of Whiteness and Blackness as viable categories. It develops strategies of both independence and interdependence. In a landscape of disarray, disassembly, dislocation, Bigness can reconstruct wholeness, resurrect realism, reinvent the collective, reclaim maximum possibility, produce a team to produce itself, impersonal: the artist no longer condemned to stardom
- 35 • The spider in a nutshell, worn around the neck. We are told it once could cure the plagues of old, but now a new plague has come. How I have lost the sources of my quotations. How I feel ready to conclude. How I had meant to say so much. Of that intension, there remains. Forest #2: the appearance of the present. 10:45. We will be numerous, to point to possibility, to enact it, to inhabit it. Betsy Rios showing her new flag to the founding fathers, he says. Nearness is this
- 36 • Oh say can you see  
By the dawn's early light  
What so proudly we hail'd  
At the twilight's last gleaming  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars  
Through the perilous fight  
O'er the ramparts we watch'd  
Were so gallantly streaming  
And the rockets' red glare  
The bombs bursting in air  
Gave proof through the night  
That our flag
- 37 • By the time we got to Woodstock  
turning into butterflies  
we are stardust  
Father I thank thee  
All those people  
In her lovers  
Bent  
Shocks of yellow  
Watch tick  
Friend  
Patient  
the ghost  
ocean  
finchade



World War I trench survivors walked away from battle and never stopped weeping. They compulsively walked themselves to death. Call their solitary lines across the countryside a search for Gabriel, angel interpreter of visions, forerunner of salvation, herald of the end. Their 20th century disorder, chromomana - call it the song Evangeline sings to her dying love, call it the loneliness of mobility, call it reaminess. 11:25 The film cuts off. The band sets up on stage. A woman and a man take places at the long table, relieving two volunteers, who return to the audience. They plug in laptops. Lights fade. The screens light their faces the way computers do. The band plays softly in front of the audience of 22, some asleep. The two performers begin the end.

• 38

Would you look at the image on the monitor and describe what you see?

• 39

It's the misty Atlantic:

Describe the image you see now

Ocean of people

Can you take me and my friend across the canyon?

How far is it?

I'm not good with distances

Look over there - how far do you think that is?

I'm sorry. I couldn't say.

Can you tell me how long the present lasts?

I don't know.

3 to 12 seconds

Really?

3 to 12 seconds, imagine that.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11 - 12

A crowd moves: the inside of a computer slowed down, trailing mosses speeded up, nipping water as a boat rows ashore. A boat rows ashore: folds its wings, finds its light. Our books explode for us to live inside them, to make our performance. Expand. Continue. Translate. Team. Fall. We will not make the world over in that image. Our efforts only bring it near, surround us with traces. We try to touch its limit. We last 12 hours. Though their hearts were sad at times and their bodies weary, it's a financial disaster, this festival. What was Woodstock the end of? Answer: the end of the time before Woodstock. If we don't describe them for our friends we will forget them, and they will fade. She appears in her boat. Repeat. This is the life that I found. It is unexpected. It is dying. By these things which we were born among we know ourselves and know that we were him, together. **Near**

• 40



## Sources

Performance texts and program notes by Lucy Plem & Ribbon Effect, 2001: Richard Rot, Jason Greenberg, Jeff Kowitzowski, Danielle Malcott, Tyler Myers, Jacob Ross, Bill Tsarna, Michael Thomas, Vicki Walden, Mary Zehel. The performance included the participation of Sheri Doyel, Michael Stumm, Dolores Wilbur, Sara McCarthy, David Pavlovic, Ian Moris, Connor Kallista, David Koderek, Brandon Ross, Christopher Furman, Rebecca Rothman, Lars Söderkvist, Lou Malozzi, Saveto Trujillo, Eric Leonardson, Mathew Goulash, Pete Wierge, CJ Michiel, Becky Phillips, Kevin Christopher, George Kehlor, Daniel Grivas, Jennifer Dowds-Kelly, Katherine Benar, Melissa Lawson, Mark Jeffery, Bryce Bennered, Anne Lawson, Edward T. Hemets, Cheri Keating, Meenukshi Dash, Charlene Tolentino, Deanne Lee, Anthony Alaraz, Vincent Dermody, Noah Loebberg, Ricky Groves.

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Transactions

## Performance Research

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# We're Live

## Use of Real Time Video in Live Performance

Ivana Mirović

*We have no future because our present is too volatile... We have only risk management. The spinning of the given moment's scenarios. Pattern recognition.*

William Gibson Pattern Recognition

### 1. Performance of recalling

In *Liveness* Philip Auslander reflects on the status of live performance in a society dominated by mass media, where television isn't just one possible discourse, but an intrinsic and determining element of our cultural formation<sup>1</sup>. In the age preceding the development of media reproducibility the concept of "live" had no special meaning. We can conclude from this that the need to emphasize whether something is a live event is a direct consequence of the mediatization of society. Early film took over the dramaturgy and acting style from theatre, developing its own vocabulary over time. Television, on the other hand, did not accept this model, but invested considerable effort to create the impression of a live event. The feeling of immediacy it created has influenced the audience so powerfully, that it now expects live events to resemble mediated ones, not the other way around.

The notion of the reproducibility of an artwork has been contemplated ever since the 1936 publication of Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Benjamin mentions the desire for fabricated closeness:

*[...] the desire of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction.<sup>2</sup>*

Media often satisfy this desire better than live performance does. Auslander even claims that the dynamic of live performance is determined by the very distinction between the performers and the audience, not their "connection" during the live performance. It is not enough to talk about the "magic" of a live theatrical performance any more, or the "energy" between the performers and the audience.

In the last chapter of *Liveness*, Auslander describes the courthouse as the last site where – in form of sworn testimony, recalled from memory – is the only admissible recording of past events. The witness who cannot remember is of no importance for the court, just as a dead or deranged person isn't. Auslander criticizes the fetishization of live performance of testimony as truth and describes it as its own delayed reaction. It is, in fact, under the influence of activities, observations and acts that precede it – an essence of testimony is not the information recalled but the performance of recalling.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Auslander *Liveness* (2)

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, II

<sup>3</sup> Auslander *Liveness* (129)







<sup>1</sup> Veljo L'art du metteur, quoted in: Grdinc V vrt za virtualni kraj (Croatian translation) (2)

<sup>2</sup> Grdinc V vrt za virtualni kraj (Croatian translation) (14)

<sup>3</sup> ibid (23)

<sup>4</sup> Herm LeFebvre The production of space (7)

<sup>5</sup> See Jameson Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism

<sup>6</sup> Veljo Speed and Information, Cyberspace Alarm

<sup>7</sup> Veljo Dvorn ostvarenje (22)

<sup>8</sup> See Herm LeFebvre The production of space

<sup>9</sup> The concept is co-authored by Andrija Vukobrat

<sup>10</sup> The notion of interface as a concept is today regularly linked to the world of computer technology, describing the means of interrelation between the machine and its user. It has, however, a much broader meaning. For example, Marleau Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception (1963) shows for the human body, its sensory network to be precise, to be perceived as an interface of a mind

<sup>11</sup> In A Thousand Plateaus (1982) Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari define territoriality as any entity or institution that restricts the free flow of individual desire. The family and the state are prime examples of territorialities, and they strive to produce the modern subject: the controlled and inhibited subject of liberal humanism and the Enlightenment; project Deleuze and Guattari argue that desire needs to be deterritorialized, and treat nomadic existence as a kind of ideal of deterritorialization

<sup>12</sup> Veljo La vitesse de l'abstraction (from Croatian translation) (22)

<sup>13</sup> Gorazd Videlić Godić (38) - referring to Marleau Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception

<sup>14</sup> From the text accompanying the choreography

<sup>15</sup> Željko Sančanin refers to the work of architects Elizabeth Gilie and Ricard Godolick (see: Džeri: Stokholms Resh: Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1996)

<sup>16</sup> Grdinc V vrt za virtualni kraj (Croatian translation) (6)

<sup>17</sup> ibid (34)

<sup>18</sup> The working title stresses the use of color to mark the emotional experience of the seen and the use of editing of video and audio material. The choreography's accompanying text tells only the two dances as the performers, but I wish to emphasize the influence of the two collaborators who form the video and audio output: this is, together with the undisturbed view of the dancers' bodies, one of the ways of experiencing the performance

<sup>19</sup> From the accompanying text

<sup>20</sup> Auslander Liveness (41)

Information has no value in itself, its value is equal to the speed of its dissemination.<sup>1</sup> The changed understanding of the dimension of information is closely connected to a different technological and informational organization of our experience. The construction of a new cyber-space subject<sup>2</sup> depends on perception and kinetics

Postmodernism has attempted to free space from its function. A strategy of fictionalization of space is at work.<sup>3</sup> Temporality becomes a spatial category, and space itself is no longer conceived of as inert - "here" only to be occupied, but as produced. Herm LeFebvre describes the condition of space as inextricably linked to means of production, new means produce new space.<sup>4</sup> With that approach in mind, spatial relations and processes can be viewed as corresponding to social relations. The very definition of post-modernity as a cultural dominant of late capitalism originates from the field of architecture but finds its application in all arts

Our experience of time is radically transformed and dislocated in postmodernity through the dissolution of the autonomous and coherent subject. The dispersed subject of postmodernity hinders access to time through testimony, narrative or history. The postmodern experience consists of moments of schizophrenic intensity, not the duration, the alienation of modernity

This approach to spatiality, whose leading proponent is Fredric Jameson,<sup>5</sup> intends to broaden the borders between the outside and inside, between surface and depth. The disappearance of distance, the unceasing permeation of all remaining voids, the relentless saturation - this all places the postmodern body in a situation of constant pressure from the immediacy from which all sheltering layers and intervening mediations have been removed. Our bodies lack a permanent point, a coordinate, and by that, any means of deterritorialization

The characteristic of the dynamic does not belong to time alone, but also to space, to the concept of space as produced, not as inert, static, given. To quote Paul Virilio, we have come to the invention of a perspective of real time, that will supersede the perspective of real space, which in its turn was invented by Italian artists in the Quattrocento (...). A phenomenon that is making both distances and surfaces irrelevant in favor of the time-span, and an extremely short time-span at that.<sup>6</sup> With the condensation of time and space, after a period of time of vehicles, we are entering into the electromagnetic conditioning of territory. Precisely this is the 'revolution of transmission', this surveillance of space in real time that substitutes the traditional organization of real territory.<sup>7</sup>

LeFebvre's "abstract spectacle" is a double reduction from a geometric perspective, the heterogeneous spaces of nature and social space are reduced to the homogeneous space of Euclid, which is then further reduced to the illusory

space of two-dimensional representations. Space is no longer something to be experienced, it is now something abstract and transparent, something to be looked at passively and from a distance. Space becomes "intelligible."<sup>8</sup>

I will try to show with examples from concrete live performances how this approach allows us to read medialized performance space as a text, with syntax and grammar

### 3. (Over)seeing space

The solo dance performance Private in vitro<sup>9</sup> by Željko Sančanin is based on the idea of using the spectators' view of the performer's body as a strategic tool for critical evaluation of public/private encoding of performance space. As a work-in-progress, Private in vitro explores its own adaptability to new spaces, undermining determinate conditions of a chosen performance space.

By obscuring the spectators' direct gaze upon the performer in action and diffusing perspectives using video projection within video projection and with the performer's shadow sometimes in the way of the projector, the materiality and function of the body are questioned. Access is available only through an interface.<sup>10</sup> The performer's identity becomes multiple-angular and the notion of reproduction overpowers that of production

This body of the performer can in no given moment be visibly reduced to a single one - the shift in perception that comes with the "delay" of the projection during swift movements in space is unavoidable. Moments of perceptual subversion, of manipulation of the spectator's view when the moving image separates from the moving body in a schizophrenic fashion, induce a concept of deterritorialization<sup>11</sup>. Detached and fragmented, the boundaries between the virtual and the imaginary are perverted

An unavoidable feeling of surveillance upon the performer, of invasion into privacy, constitutes a simultaneous feeling of unease of one's spectatorship and of a comfortable distance which incorporates audience involvement. The ambivalent situation of surveillance of space that arrives at the human body terminal, an interactive being, a transmitter and a receiver at the same time<sup>12</sup> becomes most apparent when the audience is located in a space physically separated (by a wall) from the performer, and left to comfortably view the live transit of the performance, but also the live feed of its own image.

Private in vitro is performed in two versions - absent/intervision and ecstatic/live, performed during one evening for an audience that may join either one or both of them, but also including incidental audience members who may be passing through the space, if that is the case. The titles describe the assigned relations, the positioning of the performer towards the audience. In absent/intervision the performer and the audience are located in separate spaces and the

scrutinizing nature of the spectators' view while following the "absent" performer on the video projection is emphasized, with the spectator aware of her proximity/distance, ecstasylive, the performance that places the audience in the same space with the performer, offers a simulacrum of a live body of the performer and the projected live camera feed of that same body viewed from a different angle. The question is, if the live body itself is the *ekstasylive*, that which obscures the view of the projection? Or if it is a case of just a different kind of interface - the body as a condition and context allowing a relation to objects?<sup>24</sup>

Using a progressive range of extreme, minimal movement with a stressed repetitiveness, temporal alternation and rhythmic structure, the performer asserts internal control over use of dance movement, thus contrasting the impression of external surveillance.

The distinctiveness of each (is it necessary to stress - live?) performance is not just the consequence of the spatial re-appropriation, but of the space's primary connotation, that is, its "regular patrons". The choreography has been performed on various locations: a furniture retail salon, a hotel lobby, a private apartment, an art gallery, and a shopping area underpass, always questioning what parameters define the private and the public of a certain space, where its limits are and what elements of performance can breach them, so shaping an intimate place of solo play within the public space of the audience, examining their relation and the way the performer's private enters/persists onto the field of privacy of the other/the spectator, the voyeur.<sup>25</sup> The parasite in the space is the (virtual) performance space itself - the *para-site*.<sup>26</sup>

#### 4. Immediate postproduction

A synthesized, digitally enhanced image is no longer a representation of real, but a simulation of pseudo-reality that exists only as virtual, as potential. This means the synthesized image no longer refers to an event it depicts, but to its pure possibility/probability/virtuality.<sup>27</sup> The synthesized image is a de-realization of the world and a new creation of real, of hyper-real. The perception of synthesized space is not founded on the process of memorizing locations in a space continuum, but on their tactical re-computation.

Artists often attempt to control all aspects of their work, including reception. By dislocating the point of convergence from the author and performer(s) towards the spectator and the technical process, new strategies being into play a new variable - the control over space and positions by the audience itself.

In today's field of interactivity, artists frequently research the very means of an interface that allows for the integration of coherent spaces, an interrelation between the body and the machine. Peter Weibel draws a parallel between interface and language in their inability for immediate access to reality.<sup>28</sup> But interface is precisely the medium through which we can analyze the deo-

logical structures of reality today, and first and foremost the fact it isn't identical to itself!

orangeout by authors and performers Selma Blanche, Sandra Baric (movement), Nenad Vukusic (video) and Adam Bantagalic (music) deals with perception.<sup>29</sup> Two dancers perform a union duet according to a previously designed and precise code and programmed sequence of dance elements. Several cameras are recording the room the performers inhabit. The live feed from these cameras is computer manipulated by a third performer located in another room and guided in his actions by his own impression of what he sees on his screen. The result of his work is projected onto a wall. Watching the projection, the fourth performer, led by his impression of the visual material, adds a sonic background. The audience is free to move between the two rooms having both an unobstructed view of the two bodies in motion and a mediated scene of modified audio/visual material.

The concept of orangeout asks the question of what is the master, the original, and what the first or second (perceptual) copy of a performance.<sup>30</sup> Philip Auslander quotes Peggy Phelan who states that performance's being becomes itself through disappearance<sup>31</sup>, but also refers to the deteriorating quality of magnetic tape, its

orangeout photo: Selma Blanche/Nenad Vukusic





<sup>24</sup> Michel Serres analyzes noise as a third, empty element of the message. In ideal conditions communication is a simple flow from noise. Noise is not the communicated message, but exists as a chaotic element. Any for-  
mulation, mathematics for example, is based on the exclusion of the third element – noise.

<sup>25</sup> Grönlä V verkstadsbruk (Croatian translation) (78).

<sup>26</sup> Within the presentation platform of young Croatian (choreographers) Gallery of Movement, Dance Week Festival Zagreb June 2003.

<sup>27</sup> See Boris Grönlä's A.I.H. The age of biopolitics from artwork to art documentation in the catalogue of Dokumenta 11, the exhibition Fall for example, presented Croatian artist and Robert not only through his art works but by deconstructing, moving and re-presenting in Kassel his whole studio.

<sup>28</sup> Verleuso-Ponty Phenomenologie de la perception (from the Croatian translation) (141).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid (167).

<sup>30</sup> Kunst Strategies of Subjectivity in Contemporary Performance Art (78), translated from the Slovenian by Urška Zajec.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid (78).

<sup>32</sup> Grönlä Visible bodies (95).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid (97).

<sup>34</sup> From Andrija Vojta's adaptation of Crime and Punishment.

<sup>35</sup> See in Ausländer Liveness (11).

"disappearance" with every reproduction. Of course, we notice this only when the quality of recorded material becomes so poor that the distortion becomes obvious to the ear/eye. The notions of master and copy are disappearing in the age of digital reproducibility, orange-out examines that exact moment of the recording's modification by blending the digital medium that doesn't share the magnetic tape's characteristics with the personal input of secondary performers who's manipulation of received material produces a mediated live performance.

The theory of communication by Michel Serres regards interruption in communication, noise, as privileged over information and introduces as a key moment the reconfiguration of the dialogue to include the third element of intergeneration. The dialogue thus becomes a struggle to preclude the Third.<sup>24</sup>

Noise – not just as part of the body of the message, but also a means of transmission, often omitted in contemplation, is still, together with the transmitter and recipient, an essential third element of communication structure. Its characteristic is the deconstruction and restructuring of the code. Although noise can seem an interference to the transmitter, to the recipient it becomes an inseparable part of the message. The audience in the room with the projection, not the one where the dancers move, is aware of the liveness of the performance although its experience of the dance material is only through its digitally modified form.

It's interesting to reflect on the characteristics of different interfaces – the one used by the secondary performer working on the video feed, and the one used to present the result of his work to the audience. The monitor is a catalyst, it introduces the tangible difference between the conveyor of the projection and the conveyor of the work.<sup>25</sup> Unlike the monitor, the projection of visual material onto a surface located somewhere in the space manages to transform it instantly into a performance space. This can be felt when one production is seen in a version that employs a projection, and that which (often because of the inability to obtain a projector) uses a monitor that, in that case, starts to resemble a stage prop, unlike the seeming live backdrop of the projection.

First performed in the context of a gallery space in front of an audience that moved from one "exhibit" to the other<sup>26</sup>, orange-out is in line with today's tendency of showing art by disclosing the process of its making and not (just) the artifact itself.<sup>27</sup>

The displacement of an immediate view of the performers into the sphere of the virtual through use of a digital interface can be interpreted as a kind of "transmit disruptor" of the strictly coded dance sequences. The preference of audio-visual "noise" over the immediate view of the performers illustrates today's tendency for the mediation of the performance, a tendency orange-out displays as well.

## 5. Location deformation

Alexandra Jurewa's *My<sup>2</sup>* is an interaction of the pre-recorded body of the performer with the live performance. The dancer reacts to own recorded dance materials, but also to the previously choreographed "reactions".

The recording of the dancer in front of a white backdrop has an effect of a loss of a sense of space, the body in the projected image seems away from real space. The same body, the same dance vocabulary, but a different dynamic of movement – all create an impression of a duet, an impression that is dispersed only in the moments when the projection stops its flow in a series of still frames, moments out of the continuous dance movement of the dancer on stage appearing like documents of the self-emerging movement still in progress on stage. The accompanying text of the choreography even mentions "linking of a live performance" with use of projected recorded material – as if the "projection" or "evocation" (...) enable abstract movement<sup>28</sup> by integrating old movement in to a new motor entity.<sup>29</sup>

To the "departure" of the performer from the projection, the performer on stage reacts with confusion – she "forgets" the choreographed material.

The hybridity of contemporary performing bodies can be viewed as a symptom of a very important feature of contemporary life – that of its amazing obsession with connections (...). Our experiences are constituted through a subtle matrix of connections, not only those between bodies, but between everything from the non-physical to the inductively material.<sup>30</sup>

Bojana Kunst depicts here the image of the contemporary body characterized by weakness, entropy and paradoxes: it is a place of visibility and invisibility, a disturbing remnant of nature and a commodified construction of culture, a potentiality we have just recently inhabited.<sup>31</sup>

Roger Callois<sup>32</sup> describes psychesthesia in his work. A psychotic person is not able to locate her/his self in space, the organism loses the privilege of being the central orientation point, the starting point of spatial coordinates, and the personality is no longer able to differentiate itself from the external world. For the subject to be able to position itself as such, it needs to be situated in space or it loses the possibility to form a coherent identity, a perspective over the world that surrounds it.

If we link this to the postural model of the body by Henry Head – a three-dimensional model that registers and organizes the information gathered by the senses, information about the body, its location in space and relation to other objects, then we can read the breaks in continuity of movement in *My<sup>2</sup>* as shifts in the definition of the ideal model, the created role the performer takes to. The postural model as an image of the body registers the current state, but also holds an image of past experiences and sensations it compares against the current state. It is a tem-



postally and spatially structured model - a scheme that mediates between the subject's position and her/his behavior. Medicine tracks brain injuries that can result in the loss of the body scheme and thus cause the impossibility to recognize the location of parts of or the whole of the body. The body scheme gives a context, a horizon towards all current or future movements because it holds a standard by which all consecutive changes in position are located.

The breach in spectators' perspective is particularly accentuated in a scene when the on screen performer throws an apple towards the camera while the on stage performer catches an identical apple coming from the audience - by perception a different direction.

Deformation of perception is also present in the performances of TRAFIK's Europe dances. A projected image shows a live recording of the staircase used by audience members to enter the performance space with an auditorium. A static image of the staircase nobody is using functions as a backdrop. It is just in the situations when one of the three performers exits the main performance space to appear on the projection that it seems to picture a more intimate space than the actual stage, a space that functions as a waiting room or a dressing room for the performers. Still, there is no voyeuristic element in play. Each of the performers stays "in character" in that external performance space.

An image, traditionally, has three characteristics: it presents a manifold field or set of events in terms of simultaneity (1), it functions at a distance, setting up a space or field between the seer and the seen, the physical and the psychical.<sup>28</sup>

When one of the performers "kidnaps" the camera, comes it onto the stage and turns it towards herself to seize the attention of the audience (2), it becomes grotesquely clear how much the slanted projection on the wall deforms the body moving in front of the camera. An analysis that has the postural model in mind is a highly appropriate

approach for an insight into Europe dances: a production that in its concept deals with the norms of body and movement within a post-bourgeois society.

## 6. Close-up

*Come and Punishment* - the diary of Riskolnikov directed by Tom Janesch<sup>29</sup> uses a simultaneous projection of the actors' close-ups as the backdrop during the whole performance creating an especially intimate, almost a chamber atmosphere on a minimalist stage.

A. Nicholas Vardac in his study *Stage to Screen* (1945)<sup>30</sup> shows how early film modeled itself directly on theatrical practice. The narrative structures, the visual devices such as the close-up and the fade-in/fade-out, even parallel editing have all been used on the nineteenth century melodrama stage.

The camera is not static during the performance of *Come and Punishment*, but moves in an attempt to replicate the movement of the spectator's eye, that is, the visual discourse of the spectator's experience. It is stationed in a position opposite the stage. The effect resembles the use of opera glasses - the frame of the watched scene changes, but the angle of vision remains the same. We cannot talk about cinematographic depth since the camera does not change its shooting angle or move into the performance space and there is no counterplay. The frontal view, oriented towards the spectator, functions as the today seldom used move of the actor onto the proscenium stage. We stay in the realm of the "logos", continuous treatment of space, without a shift into film's spatial discontinuity, although the black and white projection in *Come and Punishment* tries to emulate it with its lack of color and grainy image quality that resembling a film, or a European art film in particular.

During the whole performance the situations on stage are also projected onto a film screen, the



actors' faces in close-up, this may seem like Benjamin's use of the expressiveness of the actor's face, while long and slow takes call to mind the film poetic of A. Tarkovsky. Although the film takes were meant to be presented as just a form of accompanying material or were to be used to make the static front segment of the stage more dynamic, in the end the spectators' attention, like it or not, was more focused on the screen than on the actors in front of it [...], the use of microphones that somehow remove the actors' voices from the characters they play is also not clear.<sup>28</sup>

Large video-walls that simultaneously screen close-ups of events or play the instant repeats are one of the constituting elements of live sports or music events watched by an audience that grew up in front of a television screen, an audience proficient in a certain visual vocabulary and expecting live events, and I am thinking of theatrical events too, to resemble mediated ones.

The ubiquity of reproductions of performances of all kinds in our culture has led to the deprecation of live presence, which can only be compensated for by making the perceptual experience of the live as much as possible like that of the mediated.<sup>29</sup>

## 7. Hi-Fi

The use of a microphone in theatre or dance performances can be easily compared in its amplification and modification qualities to the use of live video.

People had to learn how to understand the relations between sounds made by people and sounds made by machines.<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Sterne writes: The question of the relationship between the original and the copy has become one of the focal preoccupations of twentieth century communication theories. Reproduced sound is often looked at as a mediated form of live sound. But the arrival of Hi-Fi, high fidelity sound, made the detection of mediation difficult. Only poor quality recordings allow us to distinguish the original from the copy. But Sterne claims that the question of mediation is a cultural question and just one of the possible ways to look at sound reproduction - without the technology of reproduction, the copies do not exist, but then, neither would the originals.<sup>31</sup> The first recording is now, and not the "source", the original. The questions of originality and authenticity are transformed in the context of Hi-Fi reproducibility. The very word immediate (not mediated) points in its composition to liveness as Baudrillard defines it - something that can be recorded.

Benjamin has stated similar arguments talking about film. But if we hold on to the "aura" as a unique characteristic that makes a distinction between the copy and the original, we will neglect the ways in which the possibility of reproduction changes the modes of production. Reproducibility comes to mind even before production does and is often, as is the case with originaire, a key to the conceptualization preceding the production of a piece. Sterne goes so far

as to declare the use of the term "live" to describe a performance that is not also reproduced obsolete.

## 8. Reduction

Use of added effects or "retouching" have been present since the very beginnings of film or even photographic records. The arrival of relatively affordable digital cameras that have turned personal computers into editing tables has led to their increasing use in live theatre and dance performance, but also the other way around. The work of software developer Daniel Facher is an interesting example. His software "reacts" to movement or, to be more precise, to the change in pixel structure of a video recording. During the first presentations of his work he used recordings of movements of incidental (and voluntary, informed) passers-by to create sound effects and modify transmitted video. (The transmission was always live since he only seldom records sessions of these interactions.) In time he began to collaborate with dancers and musicians who perform "observed" by his software, inspired by their own perception of the audio and video output of the computation of their own movements. A computer generated structure of a montage of shoots, or even sequences of still video frames follows the movement or music structure. It is interesting to compare this to the contemporary tendency of use of sound samples as the only source of a piece of music, not just an accessory to musical instruments or the human voice.

But, with interactivity in mind, perhaps the most interesting moment is the performance's finale - the turning of the camera towards the public whose movements become triggers for the perceptive machine of computer software transforming the audience into a performing body, but also letting it remain the performance's receptor.

In his text *Interface and Active Space* Brian Massumi calls upon Nicholas Negroponte<sup>32</sup> to describe the information overload the body will be exposed to in the near future. An impossible amount of information surpassing the ability of our body's perceptive apparatus and nervous system to receive and sort through will require a filter of a personalized interface capable of delegating in the infosphere. The interface would reduce the immense expanse of available information to a digestible amount, it would distinguish irrelevant bits of information from important ones and detect usable patterns. The body must be able to transform the raw perceptive material while protecting itself from drowning in it. Are we after the automatization of production and the revolution of transmission, [...] looking towards the automatization of the perception of seeing?<sup>33</sup>

The materiality of the body is withdrawing behind a mechanism that embodies it anew through external, programmed activity - the processing of information into a seemingly more complex, but actually reduced sequence of perceptive data that an audience based on and by the media can easily consume.

<sup>28</sup> From a review by Kim Gueulic published in *Nieuw Act 2* 12/2002.

<sup>29</sup> Auslander *Liveness* (36).

<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Sterne *The Audible Past* (210).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* (219).

<sup>32</sup> Nicholas Negroponte *Being Digital*, Alfred A. Knopf New York 1995.

<sup>33</sup> Virilio *La vitesse de l'information* (from Orsatti translation) (130).

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Crisis and Post-Crisis - The Diary of Hasko Radošević



# Theatre Doubts

Marin Blažević

photo: Sandra Vlatić (Kvarin, Deafheaf / Mouth Rouge), Thomas Aum (Hörarbeit)

Translated from the Croatian by Lada Stedn and Tomislav Blasi

## 1.

A few years ago I took part in a discussion with a theorist-artist of performance-theatre. The topic was chosen almost at random. Blažević: My interlocutor was troubled by "That is (insert the signals of disappointment and exasperation: *still / nothing but / merely / even too much*) theatre!"

## 2.

A couple of days later, an author of similar inclination persistently tried to convince me of roughly the following: "The model of theatre that Bobo Jakić and Nataša Rajković work with is perfectly clear and all of their subsequent work is only a variation of the initial model filled with more or less the same semantic material."

### 1.1.

<sup>1</sup> In the times of historical swam-gardes paid for with dear life, and today, in the post-/neo-/anti-/avant-garde networks of producers' festivals, studies and conferences, simply well paid.

<sup>2</sup> the process of creation, the potential of the performing body, the procedures of revealing the cracks, even the breaks in the representational situation, from the structure of the sign to constructions of identity.

<sup>3</sup> image (image), fusion, representation, identification.

<sup>4</sup> Gervais's use of the term experience is modeled on the German *Erfahrung*.

<sup>5</sup> Cage continues: "I find that most interesting when one finds something in the environment to look at. If you're in a room and a record is playing and the window is open and there's some breeze and a curtain is blowing, that's sufficient, it seems to me, to produce a 'theatrical experience'." (1995: 51).

The new theatre paradigm, to put it simply, is born and developed out of the aesthetic-political resistance towards the dramatic-literary and mimetic-mimetic theatre, material, means and mechanisms of production, and the ideological function of such representation and its institution, the powerful machinery for further uninterrupted, perpetual self-reproduction. After the fundamental break up which occurred sometime around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century, the theatre, only just emancipated (re-theatricalised) from literature and drama, found itself faced with the task of new self-foundation and self-definition. The next hundred years are spent in discussions of theoreticians and practitioners<sup>1</sup> concerning the original questions: what theatre is, what it could be and, of course, is it possible to abolish it, and how.

From the reduction to the actor and at least one spectator, via action, agitation, act, effect, frame, pure form, happening, image, event, experience, flux, system of signs (of signs), cruelty, Gestus, politics, ritual, ceremony, landscape, magnet, or even zero, to the transportation of metaphor of theatre into postmodern discourses, particularly of social theory, where we can, if we indiscriminately eliminate its problematic characteristics<sup>2</sup> and emphasize the manifest ones<sup>3</sup>, find it shackled to "the empire of spectacle" (Debord) and used up in "the era of simulation" (Baudillard) - all this is encompassed by the notion, practice, institution, situation, in short, a complicated phenomenon called theatre (Gervais). In the spectrum of attempts to grasp and understand theatre, extreme and complementary positions are presented by two definitors.

Gervais's theory of producing the complex personality of the actor begins with recognising the act of observing inside the act of acting.

*In the act of acting two factors are fused, which in principle remain separated in other arts, and these are the observer and the creator. That fusion acquires even more pertinence if we are reminded of the fact that the actor on stage, being listened to and observed, is not only the bearer of the audience's experience<sup>4</sup>, but that he has to provoke the observer's attitude in himself and toward himself, because it is only by such a doubling of himself, by forming the observer within himself, that he can become the representative of the observers outside himself. (...) In the way in which the actor achieves that almost virginous goal, to be both the observer and the observed, lies the whole essence of the problem of acting. (Gervais 1967: 158)*

In the famous conversation with Richard Schechner and Michael Kirby, John Cage (1995: 51) sets the definition which would not exclude<sup>5</sup>

*I would simply say that theatre is something which engages both the eye and the ear. (...) The reason I want to make my definition of theatre that simple is so one could view everyday life itself as theatre.*



For Gaviola, the theatre situation (actor - spectator) is already contained within the inner work of the actor's personality, by the interactive relationship of the organic experiences and the self-reflective instance (the inner observer) awakened by it, which by fissures over the blurred, unclear, formless organic material comes out, regulates and observes the shaping and the complication not only of the inner fundamental - sensory-experience-reflex - material and the external, as compared to daily gesture-speech-deformed, acoustic and visual transportable means of expression, but also of the actor's personality in aesthetic and ethical sense.

The actor thus performs a double action - in herself and on herself - and notes an inner action in the outside spectator: the act of seeing-experiencing (of the actor's acting) should trigger some sort of reactive, potential acting in the spectator. The co-play of the real and potential actor and spectator is the act of the creative process that should bring about the exceptional community in the theatre.<sup>7</sup> Although such inner - organic happening with a particular outside effect is particularly pronounced under the influence of the so-called aesthetic experiences, it also produces our very selves in our inner everyday life, in which we act (ourselves) and observe (ourselves), not only when we willingly or automatically put on masks and accept the parts in various cultural performances, but also when we are on the stage / in the audience of our own, intimate, inner, boundless theatre.

For Cage, every act of perception is potentially a theatre experience, since it can pose us as spectators-listeners of those occurrences that engage our attention, and have, by spilling from the flow of automatic reception and sensory processing, found themselves in the field of noticed happening that is subjected to experience but also a semantic investment, and thus already included in a representational situation, thereby becoming a happening close to theatre. The aesthetic accent or any other marking that in some way verifies the occurrence as an object of our particular attention is no longer the decisive condition (Gaviola was still in two minds about this point). What makes it sufficient is - the isolation, which is mutual, of that which attracts the eyes and the ear and of the one that observes and listens. We could say that the beginning of theatre is in the doubling by isolating. Cage's definition of theatre experience not only does not exclude, it actually includes everything. According to Cage, the isolation-doubling of everything - around us, and according to Gaviola - inside us, is already potentially a theatre situation/event/experience. If this is really so, the question becomes: what, then, is not theatre, if Brezovic's theatre is still / nevertheless / just theatre.

The trouble is maybe only in that by its open, capital and metabolism - masters of purely ethical and political nature - the theatrical stream that Brezovic creates stimulates the overflow of what we call the institution of theatre. Are we, however, ready to see the fissures in, as the song goes, the wide blue yonder of (institutional) stimulation?

## 2.1

The new-theatre international/cultural marketplace, especially in the last few decades, rapidly appropriates everything that seems as if it could be of use as an innovative shift with respect to the still hardly digested previous discovery. The new theatre got caught in the trap of its own concept: it definitely ventured into a post-dramatic (Luhmann) period, so when it already seems that the regulatory function of the dramatic-literary and mimetic-realistic theatre has been disputed<sup>8</sup>, what remains - if it wants to retain its name - is only to rise towards ever newer, that would present what was recently new as already old.

The consumption of the model itself may last a few years, and of its semantic charge even less, since it is harder for it to break out of the contextual framework (especially the national and the cultural one): so it is too big a distraction to the free flow of the aesthetic (and other) capital. Theory parades at this virtuous more and more: Making theories about performance, production and the models according to which it operates, became a bigger challenge than either interpretation or the not-only-theoretical contextualisation. Theory surmounts the contextual obstacles more easily, and thus becomes a more accessible and more lucrative mode of approaching the performances, a high road to international discursive co-operation.<sup>9</sup>

The effects of one of the initiatives of new dramaturgy, that we should try "to close up the gap between theory and practice" (cf. Van Kerkhoven 1994: 10), have surpassed even the most optimistic predictions: not only that many productions primarily cry out for an extended performance in the plenitude of subsequent theoretical elaboration, today it also offers more and more productions that aspire - to put it in Artaud's terms - to become a material reflection of often fettered theoretical, and no more literary-dramatic text.<sup>10</sup> And there would be no problem, if the theory did not become a replacement for the lack of that surplus which is discarded in order to solve the (new, theatrical) model-problem: from the lack of imagination to the lack of material links, the pronounced referential grounding of the production in its specific cultural, political and aesthetic contexts is all but suspect. All that has some relevance for the actual production or a particular performance, for the author or performer, the community or even (God forbid) tradition - and not for the abstracted new model - is considered a burden.

Finally, as a result of the forced demand for - if nothing else at least discursively - marketable innovation which leads to accelerated and reductive reception, the model soon must come to an end, by means of theatrical and festival sales - roughly after a season or two.

<sup>7</sup> I give a more detailed account of Gaviola's theory of acting in the paper entitled "Daring the Vague: Gaviola's Theatrical New Actor-Spectator" at the conference *Vague Myster Incompréhensible* the paper is published in the issue of *Polis*.

<sup>8</sup> In the essay "Gaieté dans l'obscurité" ("Theatre and the Public", 1993), Gaviola writes, "From a shaggy collection of randomly assembled individuals the theatre creates, every evening, a living, organized community that becomes alive as a collective which has awakened its dormant social urges in an oral dramatic action connecting and uniting the actors, the audience, the author and the city."

The co-play of the experiences formed and transmitted by expression of the actors and spectators is a fundamental concept in Gaviola's theory of acting which needs to be differentiated from the empathy feedback between the fictional character, the actor and the spectator. Gaviola concludes:

Acting is a selection and internalisation of the organic psychophysical resonances of man's experience which, through optical and acoustic transference, notes in its audience the psychosomatic phenomena that become bearers of a particular emotional experience. Acting is therefore not Schauspielen but Mitspiel. Mitspiel means that of those psychosomatic functions that an actor needs in order to perform a gesture or to utter a word are potentially active in the spectator. We do not conceive of an actor through listening and looking at him, out through a process parallel to his actions, the process of awakening in us of the organic elements that follow and regulate these actions. (Gaviola 1987: 24)

<sup>8</sup> If we try to analyse the concept, practice and effects of the post-dramatic theatre in a specific context - e.g. of different national theatres, or the culturally and politically heterogeneous - if it defined - areas such as Eastern Europe - we would realise that outside the horizon of the powerful Western European theatre-marketplace (i.e. within the Schengen borders, which are only ever closed for colouring purposes) with its densely networked festivals and theatre centres (possessing quite peacefully with the omnipresent offerings of the most vulgar type), the post-dramatic theatre still cannot manage to break through the normative demands of the dramatic theatre, saturated in various degrees by the more or less hidden agendas of local economic, political and national interests in the market of production.

<sup>9</sup> The digestion of new new new - theatre is certainly aided by theory in its own right, but lately the theoretical backdrop has played a major role in the sphere of production and promotion, even distribution, of new theatre goods, mostly through countless festivals. Therefore, a new job has been invented: the so-called "programmers" for those who can wrap production business up in theoretical package.

<sup>10</sup> Naturally adequate new terms, such as text performance or even speculative theatre, are proposed to fill a need of both markets: the theoretical and the theatrical.



11. who constantly act observing the spectators, and to a point allow the spectators a certain intimacy or at least heralds their actions according to the reaction of the spectators.

12. who observe one another as they observe, move, even talk to actors, perform and represent.



Let me clarify: I am not against the programme of permanent inversion within the paradigm of the new theatre, and I am even less trying to debunk the practice of theory in theatre. I am merely asking myself if it that the new theatre has also taken into that state of cultural-economic trap where the marketplace, and not the aesthetic, or even ethical or political reasons dictate the dynamics of research and the modes of presentation of the new and different? Has the new theatre been reduced to pure product, nothing but information? Moreover, does the theory take over the role formerly performed by the literary-dramatic theatre, translating everything that is heard and seen, experienced and thought up in the theatre into its vocabulary? Does that mean that the theory is fast becoming a new project of panoptic surveillance, or even of a theological dictate over the model, idea, problem of representation, the flow of performance, indeed, over the action and over the body? I just wonder how much time are we prepared to grant a certain model and the semantic material space before we conclude - supported by theory and market arguments - that that particular theatre has sunk to the level on which everything is clear? And then start looking for a new model. Will we, can we, dare we, do we even want to accept the risk of responsibly joining the multilayered process of concretisation and actualisation of a certain (performance) act - either by literally entering the performance through co-play, or by creating a discourse around it - instead of hastily discarding what seems to us to be an surplus or a sediment around the model, finally, of course, excluding the - already digested - model itself? Are we not too quick to discard - the doubt?

## 1.2.

The theatre of Branko Brnzovic is maybe too much of a theatre. Maybe even so radically still / nothing but / merely theatre that it becomes suspect. Is this already a strategy (or again nothing but a stimulation?) of a new risk?

## 2.2.

Heimspiel is a new production by Nataša Rajković and Bobo Jakić. The model has been radicalised to the point of becoming in-operative, then aroused, turned about, and finally abolished: its semantics are discharging of a great pace, except when charged with - theory.

## 1.3.

The shallow and tight scene of *Kamov*, *Deathwrit* / *Moulin Rouge* closed at the back by the scenery and a painted curtain, crowded with performers (actors and musicians), shakes under the burden of both material and performance, which is begging for additional space in which it will inflame all its suppressed potential. And when it seems as if the suffocated space would burst under all this crowding and stirring, at the last moment the scene opens up: the scenery moves to a side and its entire large central block moves to the depths of the stage and the freed space begins to acquire scary proportions, horizontally, vertically, in perspective. And while it seems that the torn-away block of the scenery is unmistakably sliding towards the backside wall of the stage and that it will, accompanied by a music crescendo, crash into that wall (the first wall?) with all its might, knock it down and break out into the street, into the city, all the way to Catalina-Macedonia, into that newly opened space, that demonic stomach, boots sail in, and then a ship, and then a submarine, a constructivist-futurist Sun-cog wheel is lowered, mermaids frantically jump about, sailors pop out of chimneys, landscapes and periods mingle - as a result of a sudden expansion of space, the wind starts and blows in the faces of the sceptical spectators: will this giant wide open organism suck us in, or is it nothing but theatre, gaping open like a grave (J. P. Kamov)?

## 2.3.

The first part of *Heimspiel* takes place in an area divided into eight segments, or better, into rooms not separated by walls but marked by wires on the floor, sockets in the air: a rare piece of furniture and lamps hanging from a ten metres high ceiling. In these fields-rooms eight actors perform their mainly narrative tasks, while the spectators wander about. It seems that all the parallel happenings - eight scenes/stories/tasks of the performers and a number of individual interpretations and performances which is equal to the number of spectators moving around in the area - were conceived as a continuous scattering and wrinking of ever new, flickering, macro-theatrical situations. Besides, the tasks/roles between the spectators and the actors<sup>11</sup> change here at every moment and at the same time establish and deconstruct the theatrical relations between the spectators themselves.<sup>12</sup> But, all of a sudden, while the spectators are, after the initial confusion, already amused by their new-found multilayered roles (spectator-director-actor-character), a reversal occurs: the wall at the rear end of the hall is revealed as the fourth wall, even though up until then there has been no indication of separating the auditorium from the stage, the two basic units of theatre space. As the curtain slowly rises, a lit but empty auditorium is revealed. Who are the spectators to fill it?

Ramov and Hempel are productions using opposite but overlapping dramaturgical-directional strategies. My parallel reception-meta-performance will try to demonstrate how these two productions, bent on examining the scope and registers of theatre, in the end engage the paradox of liminal as well as normative states and zones of the theatrical phenomenon<sup>64</sup> and the experience thereof.

Let us somewhat casually imagine a heuristic prop in the form of a theatre continuum, stretching from some negative definition of non-theatre, all the way to some positive idea of total theatre<sup>65</sup>. The new theatre investigates the strategies and means of - forever deferred - self-cancellation of theatre: the swings of cruelty, the anti-representational /aesthetics/ referential performances of the post-dramatic body (cf. Lehmann 1999b, 2000), aware of its power to cause sudden breaks in semiotic chains by means of its astatic presence. What's more, the unstable (meta)representational multiplications might also result in serious disturbances, even in momentary blockade of the self-reproductive workings of the representational (theatre) situation, the framework, limits, relations and rules of which being repressed, concealed, blurred and eventually dissolved before they can be established. Total theatre, on the other hand, stabilises the representational situation; the roles are clearly defined, the obligation or the enthusiasm of producing meaning reduces noise in the channel, wherein the body is instrumental and subject to manipulation, the terror of total annihilation abolishes the awareness of theatre as alternative (cf. Lehmann 1999a, 450, 490) if not performative artistic practice in the zone of the liminal. Communication is confined to the scene which excludes the spectator. It is the prohibition of motion, physical participation in performance, the invisibility (both literal and metaphorical) of the spectators as an instance of the isolating-doubling subject, that the appearance of the staged world-theatre in its totality is predicated upon. The actor-character representing the repressed spectators behaves as if he were not observed and unaware of the observer: there is no other here. The total or absolute theatre is the aim of *realism*<sup>66</sup>, which conceals its totality (and totalitarism), paradoxically, behind the mask of non-theatre. The hidden or unobserved theatricality resembles automatised performances in countless norm-abiding cultural performances of everyday life: in the realm of politics, race, gender, class. The representational structure and the theatre situation are most stable, and therefore most oppressive, when they seem to have been abolished, when the gaze is denied, as if the here-now were not a show, a spectacle.

But neither Hempel nor Ramov suppose non-theatre and/or total theatre as pure, crystal clear, liminal points of some imagined theatre continuum, proposing to question these notions instead. Towards the end of the actual performance, both productions turn around to say: did we not see, in retrospect, a circle joining this end and the beginning, instead of a straight line of theatre continuum?

## 2.5.

Exploration of the interface and overlapping of the space and the time of performance, of story and discourse, duration, arrangement and perspectives, necessarily brought Nataša Rajović and Bobo Jakić to Hempel: here the spectators (after the introduction and before the reversal) move through the space of performance as in *Observations*, but they move completely freely; then they witness confessional monologues of performers-characters as in *Slowing Down*, but the fact that the walls of the rooms have been knocked down, that it is possible to jump over them and at the same time listen to what is going on in the neighbouring rooms, discards (it could also be said that it ironically makes relative) the intimacy of performance, unlike the *Uncertain Story*, where the invisible areas and the unseen clips of events were indicated by sounds and drawn out in chalk, the floor plan of the apartment (how life-size) has been moved from the rear wall to the floor of the stage - all the areas and all events are at the same time available to the eye and the ear of the observer. Although the space and time are necessarily closed by the borders of the theatre and limited by the predetermined duration of performance of each segment of the play, this action and the drawn out or even fragmented narrative structure were already set, and places and mottos for variations and improvisations scheduled, with respect to previous plays, Hempel's is a performance marked by a significant openness of its spatio-temporal confines (up until the reversal): the spectator makes his own decision where to go and how long he will stay at a certain point, which in a large measure means he can freely organise space and time, perspective, the narrative route and - since he himself acts - the action.

The sudden reversal, the raising of the curtain and the revealing of the auditorium lit by the same light as the stage, causes momentarily a further collapsing of representational planes and the newly created cracks and gaps provoke a state of wonder and disbelief, and even, possibly, of complete uncertainty: who, in fact, and what, is performing and representing? It is only the invitation of the actors-characters-spectators to the spectators-characters-actors to gather in the auditorium that marks the reversal, at first only rudimentary, of the conventional order actor-spectator. And thereby the beginning of the end of the opening of the space and time of the performance to spectators' action. However, the uncertainty with respect to positions, rules, powers and actions of the spectators/actors is not resolved for some time: the stage lights unite the two parts of the theatre hall, the actors first freely move among the spectators and converse with chosen individuals, and then with the entire audience collectively, up until the new decisive reversal: the darkening of the auditorium!

<sup>64</sup> then also situation: convention, institution, practice

<sup>65</sup> The term total theatre here does not refer to Gesamtkunstwerk: various modernist concepts of total, syncretic art: the avant-garde political spectacles and post-modernist collage practice. The term is used primarily in connection with the socio-politics of the process: system and mechanism of a particular mode of theatre representation implying the socio-cultural consequences of totalisation and totalisation through omission and spectacle. Here the term is also related to the concept of absolute drama as used by Brandt and Pöschel (1991: 4).

<sup>66</sup> Realism as a style, but also, in the sense of Lyotard's critique, as a "heterocentric" practice, a "fantasy", an echo of the "call for order - a desire for unity for identity for security or popularity", has the task to "preserve various consciousness from doubt" - "by means of the 'correct rules'", using "the effects of reality" and stabilising the relevant "according to a point of view which endows it with a recognizable meaning" (cf. Lyotard 1983: 331-338).

There are no shifts in Karmov. The spectator is anchored in the auditorium, the actors move on the stage, they are separated by a forestage which is not crossed from either side. The performance lasts for three hours, without a break. The space arrangement and the distribution of roles in a theatre situation are here completely conventional and fixed. However, if we resist the seductive discourses (or the anger due to its pressure) we could notice that the set space of the performance is actually inadequate. The scene protrudes into the auditorium, the raised and uneven floor of the narrow stage creates an illusion of instability of scenery, as if on the verge of collapsing: parts of the floor are raised or opened and reveal the scenery underneath, the musicians sit at the openings, actors swarm from all over the place, squeezed by the side of the proscenium, as if they wanted to break through the invisible membrane that divides them from the spectators. They do not only want to splash the spectators with the intensity of the performance but also want to physically step into the auditorium, but the membrane is as strong as the fourth wall and they bounce back, towards the scenery. So the break through at that side becomes actually psycho-physically necessary when - covered by the mass of events and bodies that move greedily all over the place, following the choreography or instinctually, at times slowing Down and pent-up, at times nervously or even wildly dancing, rolling around, standing, singing, swinging, scurrying, jumping, crying - the available stage space and the attention of the audience just cannot cope with that concentration and - quantity.

In the already described reversal, the opening up of the stage, the spectators will feel a breath of fresh air, but the relief after the heavy suffocation is only temporary: what follows is the conquering - covering up - of the newfound space on the stage: parts of scenery are taken apart and reassembled, usually on all sides, so in a moment it can seem that not only the actors-conquerors but also the entire permanently (de)generating scenery - acts, turning into a new, giant organism of performance which - at least it seems that way - grows uncontrollably. And: squeals, puffs and moves menacingly.

The third part commences with another assembling and closing of the scene. Three walls of the theatre house - both sides and the rear - physically block further advancement of the performance and the panting scenery. Therefore the push starts again towards the fourth wall: a piece of scenery, formerly a torn organ of scenery breaking through the rear wall of the stage, now duly slides back towards the proscenium - well it cut off the heads of the spectators the way it has already swallowed the actress who is dragging it behind her until her body disappears in the gut of the stage, a moment before her head, caught tight between two blocks of scenery, bursts! Who is next?

The analysis of the time of performance could be reduced to a warning, to the threat spoken by an actor on the part of Karmov and the director: "It ain't over when it's over, but when I say it's over." The expanding of the space of performance could be formulated accordingly: the space does not end where it ends but where I say it ends. Like any other performance, Karmov could last indefinitely, break the walls, conquer the space far beyond the horizon of the spectator, abolish its ability to isolate-double and reach the totality. As a particular performance, Karmov stresses that possibility, and thus the special power of the directing subject to decide (only) in the theatre of the ends of performance space and time. Nevertheless, does the director have the final say?

Having - apparently - expanded them to the full Karmov is stopped in institutional/conventional frames of the theatre: in spite of the effort, the performance remains closed in the space of the stage and the auditable time of performance, however stretched. Does this strategy imply the desire of the new theatre, which in its most radical versions attempted to undermine the institution of theatre, even aspired to become non-theatre?

Should not the fact that the scope of theatre has been fully expanded and its limits and frames threatened by the potential, lead one to think that the performance strategy of Karmov - by virtue of its voluntary relinquishing of breaking out the boundaries/walls and disparity between the achieved potential and the unexpectedly restrained realization - goes beyond the evidence of decision, the latent repressiveness of the institutionalized theatrical representation and its ideological function?

## 2.6.

Verbal signs are predominant in Karmov. The talk is incessant, often many voices speak at the same time. Before the first reversal, the simultaneous performance on all eight stations/stages produces estranging multi-voice effects: (non)accidental? harmonies to dissonant clusters: from sound vibrations and clashes of word fragments, through unstable rhythmic structures veering on loss of any rhythmic pattern, from sudden clashes of scattered pieces of information, possible narrative particles: to vaguely recognisable narrative lines. Even the spectators who choose only one of the rooms without walls can hardly concentrate on only one segment of the performance, while those who choose to wander from room to room or remain in the middle of the hall, marked as the hallway of the apartment, are in for a particular simultaneous experience. Through multiple overlaying of sound, rhythmic, syntactic, semantic and narrative layers of performative speech, including the various noises the moving spectators make, the possibility of perceptual distinguishing of the source of the voice gradually disappears. This cacophony of sounds, voices, speech, this spontaneous theatre polylogue, this produced, corpo-realised intertextuality, makes the relations of representational situation of the theatre even more unstable: who can be heard, who is it, actually, who speaks necessarily?



25 The high risk role is played by the young performance artist Anica Tomić



The distribution of noises/voices becomes clearer after the reversal, when the participants in the performance are deployed in space so as to finally make visible the distinction between the audience and the stage

There is hardly any music in *Hamspiel*. In *Kamov*, *Deathwrt* / *Moulin Rouge*, on the contrary, music is everywhere. If the participants of *Hamspiel*, both the actors and the spectators, were engaged in a relative free play on all levels (though not in all stages) of performance, from sound, through movement, to narrative, between fiction and reality, the positions and actions cutting through representational situations (until the second reversal)<sup>17</sup>, in the case of *Kamov* one can only be saved from drowning by fighting for some new collectedness, some presence of oneself in the co-play with the actor, with one's real outside self, and the potential acting - acting-doubling - self

Even though the special conditions of staging speech in the theatre requires a certain slant of the intonation towards theatricality, *Hamspiel* aims to minimise this, so that stage speech becomes closer to the everyday, private, conversation or confessional mode

## 1.6.

In contrast to *Hamspiel*, *Kamov* aims to reduce speech to empty theatricality, to desemantise it, and even finally - and paradoxically - to deverbalise it. The zero degree of speech in *Kamov* is an already decontexted intonation forming words and sentences in such a way that the actor's speech performance immediately reveals a high - though only initial - degree of theatrical exaltation. This stylistically marked expressive base, is of course linked to an appropriate voice and body posture, becoming a spring-board for performance in accordance with Artaud's demand, "to extract from speech the possibility of expanding beyond words, of developing words in space". The semantic charge of words (and sentences) dissolves in its tissue, in the sound that deforms it. Either speech becomes song, often many-voiced and polyfunctional,<sup>18</sup> expanding the word in terms of both semantics and sound only to overflow the compact structure of sounds, and meanings, comprising it into affecting melodic whirlpools. Or the hypertrophied intonational amplitudes cause a progressive breakdown of articulation, the bursting of words and sentences into fragments, that in turn become howls, cries, sighs, groans, thundering, yelling, giggling, spitting, trembling, and finally the thick, hoarse, vibrating, primordial, tear soaked - scream: coming from the bent body, it pours out of the blood-red mouth of the actress<sup>19</sup> and fills the space (though by means of loudspeakers) like a plague, a swing at the outside from the bottom of open cruelty

In the extremes of theatrical pathos, the combined, but also conflicting, effects of lush music and the hypertrophied verbal decor, elevate the musical-speech performance in *Kamov* first into concreteness and spatiality, materially and hardness after Artaud,<sup>20</sup> and eventually, in special moments - under the growing pressure of performing bodies<sup>21</sup>, resisting technical control, the petrification of clear articulation and gestulation - inevitably disappears into noise

Nevertheless, how can *Kamov*, *Deathwrt* / *Moulin Rouge* reconcile the exclusive power of the theatre to be "the only place in the world and the least collective vehicle at our disposal to affect the organism directly" (Artaud), and the fact that this is being done also through two (deformed and contaminated but still actual) live genres, the musical and the melodrama, placed at the lower threshold of performing arts, verging on entertainment industry?

What is the clash of howls and cries for?

## 2.7.

The performance of *Hamspiel* progresses and the nose of fiction tightens around the neck of the spectator

The spectator can try to arrange the story, but this point of view will continually elude him, the plot line will stray and the whole fall apart

Or, the spectator can search the privileged moments of narrative, the signals the performance is sending of the (auto)biographical, of the not entirely fictional, of the "authentic" (as the authors like to say) representational/narrative material. Jakšić and Rajković have once again gathered and developed the basic material directly in the process of working with the actors-performers, bereft of the normative desirability of a dramatic-literary template, which procedure not only resulted in a dehierarchised relations between actors-performers and characters, but also brought the hierarchical positions of the dramaturge and director in the state of productive uncertainty, depriving them of the safety-net of the text and making them dependent on the actor-performer. This significantly expanded the uncertain area of representation wherein their personality can develop most fully, affecting the elements composing the narrative and character development as well as enabling more individualised expression and gesture, during rehearsals, but also in every single performance

Or, if the spectator is insensitive to the gaps in representational structure, not interested in separating fictional from real identities, natural from artificial signs, in questioning the happenings, i.e. realisation of the performative, he can abandon himself to the soothing effect of fictionalisation, attempting an interpretation of the proa/narrative, which could, for example, revolve around the efforts to establish and maintain

<sup>17</sup> "The concept of free play, discussed by Derrida in the essay "Structures, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" is here used in an almost provisory manner and in its initial meaning: "free play is always an interplay of absence-presence"

<sup>18</sup> Used for the purposes of commenting, irony, association heightened meaning, affective states or special atmosphere etc.

<sup>19</sup> Suzanne Bressac

<sup>20</sup> beyond her metaphysical programme, of course

<sup>21</sup> as "complex network of collected drives, intensities, energy points and currents" (Jahrmann 1999b: 41)

communication, and the final inability of doing this, in a typical situation of bourgeois drama, the guests have arrived

<sup>22</sup> e.g. a semantic discharge of everyday communication

Or, instead of looking for an interpretive common denominator<sup>23</sup>, the spectator can endeavour to classify the information gathered, to arrange fragments of various individual stories, assemble the awkward perspectives, outline the characters, elusive behind the mask of a type, hopelessly groping for an actant-tail function that would constitute them in a dramatic situation

The production of the narrative, the ambiguous performative, the dubious identity of the performer, the non-acting of characters, as well as the personal, the quotidian, the intimacy, the banality – all these elements Hermespai inhales from *Observations*, *Slowing Down* and *Uncertain Story*. But it does not stop at this. In Hermespai, all the (already) standard poietic elements are first radicalised (until the first reversal), and then progressively functionalised. The gradual closing of the interactive field, the strengthening of the dramaturgical construct, and, after the second reversal, the establishing of the features of genre,<sup>24</sup> style,<sup>25</sup> form and system of communication,<sup>26</sup> unexpectedly transforms Hermespai into a rather conventional stage production. This confusing transformation, the dramaturgical arc from the wide openness of the performance to the rigid representational enclosure, might make us wonder whether Hermespai, underneath the narrative, fictional, performative and interpretive layers, is not conducting – by means of performance itself – not the spoken text – a parallel theoretical discussion – perhaps precisely about the told and non-theatre

The second reversal in Hermespai will be marked by the line “Or else they are not here at all”. The spectators, that is

And, while Hermespai is preceded by a dramaturgical-directional workshop<sup>28</sup> a process of searching for the sources and materials of the future piece, a series of everyday, private, small narratives, situations and events, intimate problems and sensations, the texts that are ranked low on the scale of the culturally representative and only potentially of aesthetic value

## 1.7.

Kamov, *Deathmet / Moulin Rouge* swallows up, digests and regurgitates an enormous quantity of capital – literary, dramatic, film, poetic, paraking of both high and popular aesthetics, as well as political, cultural, national, traditional, philosophical, historical, mythical.<sup>29</sup>

Instead of a textual template, there are the (inter-textual-modal) chains of transposition. Kamov's life-story and his proto-expressionistic opus are first transposed – not without sympathetic irony – into Slobodan Šepić's neo-expressionistic dramaturgy of Kamov, *Deathmet* (cf. Peteković 1997), this whole poietic package is then patchwork-like transposed into a musical, which already in its generic code transposes the tragic into the melodramatic, the political into entertainment, the aesthetic into kitsch, blocking the transformation of montage-attraction, of the shock, into a point, an attitude, an impetus. A classical Brechtian iconoclastic move transposes the musical itself into a destroy-musical: it falls apart amid the sweat, the jerks, the howls and screams, the flesh and blood. Or, to counter the thundering carnality of the performance, the words and musical motifs linked to iconographic details suddenly drastically increase the associative capacity of the piece, so that through Kamov's (Šepić's) eye there appear live images of degeneration of Croatian acting (not only in the theatre), the scenes from the European bordello, the symbols of Yugoslav unrest, navette (Tito's ship *The Sisyphus*, with the Kosovo Albanians drowning in its wake, to the sound of pop schmalz). The iconoclastic drilling and the pressure of the historical-political context and the polemical aesthetic mediated cause the musical to collapse as a genre (both theatre and film)<sup>30</sup>

But not everything in Kamov is as clear as it might seem: the sequence of transpositions of texts, the aesthetically already confirmed templates (literature, music, film, painting), of time and space, contexts, styles, genres, cannot be followed successively in the performance itself as they can be when describing the devices used. For a moment it can seem that the texts pervert each other, that the performance is forming monstrous generic hybrids, but the very next moment dispels this impression, not because of the iconoclastic spiral of destroy-ideology,<sup>31</sup> but because of the fact that the dramaturgical-directional strategy the time around is total contamination (of texts, genres ...), aiming at the uniqueness of every single discharge of the performance. When Kamov grabs hold of the Sun rising him high above the stage, while the blasting music shakes the foundations of the theatre, and the actors sing for all they are worth, louder and louder and louder still, the recipient cannot doubt the kind and meaning of what he sees and hears, for it is not only pathos in kitsch or kitsch in pathos, it is this, that and also everything else, but first of all a powerful, naked effect, pure force

In order to confute all textual and performance capacity into a single, unified, blasting, impact, or a series of such impacts, the strategy of total contamination needed to encompass as well the planes of representation are the staged events (fictional reality or are they part of a dream, hallucination, image or vision, does the collective song and dance establish a mediating communication system (cf. Plištak 1991: 3) between the narrative, characters, the texts of the piece and the spectator, or does it continue, by other means, the uninterrupted sequence of inter-fictorial intercourse, is this theatre (within theatre within theatre within theatre ...) or fictional reality? The contamination of representational planes produces a paradoxical effect, for even though every available conventional and unconventional means of multiplying the

<sup>23</sup> For example, the musical basis of the production are the motifs (musical and verbal) whistled from fifty-three (!) songs, mostly popular tunes from the heyday of Croatian and Yugoslav pop music. Merely digging in the collective memory of the spectator (viewer) the patchwork soundtrack is only one of several dramaturgically carefully designed parallel sign systems operating in the performance: only one of its many currents in the sea of dreams, images, drawings

<sup>24</sup> It is hard to read the template of a comparative analysis of Šepić's play, Brechtian performance and Luhmann's film, but we must persevere in it if we are to reach the level of fictional-spectatorial performance

<sup>25</sup> see my essay in *Palimpsest* 2021 (2004) “Director vs Actor or Media vs Brechtian”

scenes and breaking the theatrical frame, alongside all of Brezovic's standard iconoclastic collisions, have been used: their main metatheatrical or deconstructive objective: to disclose the structure and mechanism of producing illusion. Theatre, spectacle, image, has been transformed into its opposite. The contaminated devices of meta- and de-theatrisation have been swallowed up by their hypertrophied side-effect - the theatre itself. The hypertheatricality of Karovic is not a mere sum total of sheer quantity and the fact that the devices of disclosure and destruction are produced in the theatre and by the theatre, this performance shamelessly declares itself as hypertheatrical, its deconstructive, stylised and artificial aspect seem to forestall every expectation of something more than, or other than theatre taking place on stage. However, is not the evident fact that the live dogs in a cage of *The Grand Master of All Scoundrels*, are replaced by stuffed toys in Karovic's *Deathvent / Moulin Rouge*, suspicious?

## 2.8.

Hempel is the performance of progressive erasure of the spectator. Although each of the eight simultaneously performed scenes of the theatre installation is inserted into a more or less flexible matrix, including the narrative one, the participation of the spectator remains paramount. At the very beginning, the installation seems to be a field of almost total free interactive play, but a more experienced spectator-performer would notice that the reactions and improvisations of the actors-performers rarely jeopardise the structure of the representational matrix. It is more likely that the restricted repertoire is meant only to produce the impression of an open structure, of a cross of choice: the possibility and uncertainty of improvisation is mostly confined to the actor's Gestus and only seldom underwrites the act. When it occurs, the transgression is intended to function as suggestive, to deepen and not to solve the cross, to perhaps challenge, but by no means to destroy the structure. The true improviser is the spectator. But this role of his is only short-lived, even though at the moment of reversal when the curtain suddenly rises, revealing an empty auditorium, it seems that the functions could be completely reversed: that those who entered the performance space as spectators could be exposed to the gaze of those who had previously greeted them as actors.

After the reversal, as they sit in their seats in the auditorium,<sup>36</sup> while the actors-performers occupy a row of chairs facing them,<sup>37</sup> the spectators can still participate in the performance. The actors-performers have quickly abandoned the auditorium and direct communication with particular spectators, but as for the discussion topics, the spectators are invited to make suggestions themselves. Although somebody always does accept the invitation, after a few initiatives from the audience it becomes clear that the actors have worked out the strategies of taking the challenge beforehand, and that they are actually making a detour to the pre-established dramaturgical scheme of answering questions of what to do or discuss: either coffee or a joke; either watching television or another joke, either this or that. As the actors-characters and spectators-characters writhe about enmeshed in hopelessness: the concept of free play is being tried, so to speak, in the sphere of dramaturgy, but not on the level of the visible structure of representation, now reduced to the formulae exterior, but on the level of meta-dramaturgical exploration - not discursively, but immediately through the performance - of dramaturgical (partly narrative) strategies known from Jelbic's and Rajkovic's previous work. One of the other acts from the ineffectiveness of futile acts and empty conversation, is precisely "a personal narrative". The self-referential irony of such representational precept deepens when one of the actors-characters-performers, fed up with changing subjects like tv channels and with personal narratives, suggests a little silence: or a short break?

Of course, the break does not remain a break, nor silence silence, for it is precisely during the break and the silence that the most intensive action and the thematically most disturbing testimonial take place. Layers of time and representational planes become apparent, while there is a break and everything is silent on the plane of fictional reality, one of the characters-actors-performers retells a film rolling "in his head" during these moments of fictional break/silence: the plane of imagination (which compresses and fragments the time necessary for the recounted events to really happen) is of course not represented only by means of verbal description but is also presented (almost like on film) as a fast-forward performance. The temporal and representational gap in the flow of fictional reality, a subjective view one of the [actors]-characters has of the others, and their mutual relationships, is followed by a shift onto the time/plane of performance: the actors act the horizon of the character (for a character cannot see what is going on inside the head of another character) and comment on the presented, filmed interior monologue as performers. Even the spectators have their say: "Was it chaotic? Was it normal? Was it nothing?" After the hope that no-one will start a "personal narrative" during the break/silence is voiced again, there comes a new temporal-representational (one might be tempted to say ontological) problematic insert: a traumatic confession of an actress-performer-character? that she had carried a dead child in her body. As soon as this fact (?) has been uttered, another character takes over the function of the narrator: the personal narrative shifts into the third person. Who is the proper narrator of the story of the unborn child, anyway, which plane of representation does it occupy, which, whose time and discourse does it belong to: fictional, autobiographical, biographical, dramaturgical, theoretical? In the end, one of the female performers assumes the role of an observer, surveys, like a camera-eye, the goings-on on the stage, everything that can be seen and heard at that moment. Furthermore, she voices her comments on the proceedings, we could even say she represents the spectator's imagined train of thought, until the long staring at the faces of performers-actors-characters marks the end of break and silence, filled with action and speech. And what is the real spectator to do all this while?



36 representing on the plane of the fictional situation/narrative the side of a living room the guests are intended to occupy



37 on the plane of fiction - as hosts

The spectator can become preoccupied by unravelling the dramaturgical fissures and layers, the shifting of planes, times and perspectives in the representation of (whose?) narratives. Or he can resist the temptation and experience the frustration that - as the performance matrix becomes ever more complex and multifarious - he becomes ever more excluded from play, even though until the second reversal he remains, at least on the plane of fiction, a character in the - play. The actors-performers-characters still address the guests, and their Gestus reveals the awareness of the presence, liveness of the visibility and the gaze of the spectator, even though immediate communication is constantly being interrupted from a safer position in the mediating communication system.

<sup>34</sup> at least within each miniature, since their swift progression emphasises temporal discontinuity, that not a feature of realism

"Either they are no longer here", this is the line marking the second reversal. After the last - or, they are no longer guests. But spectators suddenly wrapped up in the darkness of the auditorium. The fourth wall has finally unilaterally been erected. Fourteen thematically defined scenes/minutiae, entitled "Situations on the carpet", fragmented, torn out of the already third-base narrative of the peace, mostly dialogical and successively performed, isolated by intense spotlight, are played out in a scenic and fictional world that denies the spectator in order to uphold the illusion of its reality.<sup>35</sup>

The beginnings of the new-theatre paradigm can be recognised not only in the demands for emancipation from dramatic literature, but also in the devices, styles and strategies of disclosure and even removal of realism from the theatre imagery as well as performance. It is somewhat of a paradox that this process is put to an end by attempt at establishing a (non-theatre) reality on stage, which, a further paradox, always remains a reality inserted into the reality of the scene (or at least into the scene of reality), so that - if in no other way, then by means of this very framing - it inevitably finds itself in a representational situation, already verging on theatre (although not necessarily its institution). The performance of Henspel (and the theoretical discussion enacted therein) tests - so to speak - how long can the matrix of theatre representation withstand the pressure of reality and the paradox of consistent use of realism in the theatre.

The relatively free co-play of the actor and the spectator in the creation of the performance until the first reversal is a chance to investigate the site of the appearance of the real, as that (self-represented?) type of experience and happening still untouched by fictionalisation, not yet named and still without a clear status or a function in the theatre situation. The real happens by accident for both sides in the situation (the representing and the observing), or only one side thinks it actually happened, with the representing agent perhaps only pretending, or the spectator is intervening in the process of representation. Should we start from the less than certain assumption that the reality of time and place of performance, the affective machinery and the organic material<sup>36</sup> of the performing body is beyond question, the reality of what is being represented remains dubious. Until the first reversal, Henspel reduces the degree of completeness, rigidity and mandatory status of the theatrical, representational, performance matrix to the minimum below which reality might overflow the action still recognised as theatre. This preserved minimum of non-matrix of the matrix can still seem too calculated, manipulative, even repressive, especially when contrasted with the concept of non-matrixed performing.<sup>37</sup> (But is the everyday reality manifested as not restrained by the matrix and the norm? Does not supposing the opposite mean succumbing to an illusion even more dangerous than that of the theatre? The matrix does not protect Henspel from the onslaught of the real, the nameless, indiscriminate, expressionless, blind instinctive, physical, life-giving magma devouring every symbolic order, including the theatre situation (and institution), simply because Henspel, like any other production, could not resist such a threat (of freedom or death?) anyway, if it were to strike in full force, however well grounded in convention and secured by a network of structures it may be.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> to say nothing of the tactile, fluid, energy

<sup>36</sup> especially prominent in the arts of the neo-avantgarde (cf. Kirby 1992)

<sup>37</sup> e.g. Kriem, Deleuze / Guattari, Foucault

<sup>38</sup> social, religious, political, national, racial, gender, etc.

On the evidence of Henspel, the danger that can be reduced lurks in the matrices of culture<sup>39</sup> - performances outside the theatre as the institution and temple of art, the privileged site of inquiring, thinking, deforming and critically observing the repressive and normative aspects of the experience and events we usually call real, as opposed to theatre. Until the first reversal, Henspel allows as much reality as the minimum of aesthetic non-matrix would withstand. The impulse of free play is thus finally curbed by a severe impediment, but who or what can guarantee that otherwise we ourselves would not be eliminated from the (institution of) theatre by the terror of (quodlibet, historical) reality, the total theatre with no evident aesthetic function which is always potentially an ethical, political, cultural provocation? It is because of this that Henspel retains the conditions of safe management of reality, capable in turn of producing the illusion of uncertainty of the theatre, even of non-theatre, in order to thereby make possible for the spectators to experience the surplus of free play, movement, observation, listening, communication, in the reality outside the theatre, otherwise impeded by the imposed and fixed, pronounced and implied matrices of cultural representation. The surplus of experience might become more than a therapy, perhaps even an impetus to critical isolation from the confines of the matrix, once its structure has been laid bare by means of theatrical doubling, the theoretico-dramaturgical analysis, the fissuring of planes and the unmasking of representational strategies, repeatedly demonstrated (thematized and re-nested) between the first and the second reversal. If not.

The closing fourteen minutiae are performed closely observing the basic postulates of realism<sup>40</sup>: each miniature is hermetically sealed behind the fourth wall, as can be seen in the body language of the actors, their avoidance of looking towards the audience, total immersion in the given action, the effort to achieve a maximum of psychological identification with the character, to reproduce the everyday technique of body and speech. But, totally unexpectedly, the representational programme of realism (to literally mimic reality), becomes literally enacted by the actors. The conventions of stage speech demands that in their



mime-realistic representations a whisper must be audible and speech articulate. Realism thus becomes a style, but loses its purchase on reality. The actors in *Hieronymus* engage this paradox: their speech really does become ever more inarticulate and inaudible. As the light dim. Soon, there will be nothing to either hear or see. The spectator will be abolished.

The final moments of *Hieronymus* make manifest what is latent in realism: the negation of the gaze, the fear of the observer who must be banished to the darkness of the auditorium. Hieronymus stages the elimination of theatre's situation from the visible: realism realised as reality on stage. Invisible, theatre - or, more precisely, the total potential of theatre, including the critical awareness capable of creation, and not only of reproduction and simulation - fades in the consciousness, approaching its totality. The only thing that can still engage both the eye and the ear are darkness and silence.

What now? is the title of the last miniature

### 1.8.1.

There is no doubt that Kiaros; *Deathwish / Moulin Rouge* makes use of all the means at its disposal in order to spread the virus of theatre contamination into the audience. To this end the director's strategy had to be subordinated, naturally without a political resolution, to the Piscatorian imperative of the external intensification of the effect, the actual effect which results from the matter itself. All that occurs, occurs in the first place because of its immediate (organic and mental) effect, eventually expanding and becoming ever more violent. But, what is the purpose of all this uncontrollable intensification, the unscrupulous and impertinent contamination, the increasing seducing by and poisoning with intensity, volume, quantity, actual effect, capital and material, the visual, the auditive, the affective, the aesthetic, the political, the interpretative, the trivial?

Are the actors and spectators but the helpless victims of this performative-representational cannibalism?

### 3.

Could we perhaps find the answer by transposing Breznev's directing strategy and its actor-spectatorial performance into the grand finale of Gaskell's theory of acting?

Gaskell's (virtual, theoretical) actor needs a dramatic action that would progressively provide him with new incentives and ever more intensive organic experiences by virtue of its normative content and dramaturgical structure and development. But instead of striving towards the complete merging of his actorial and dramatic character - the ultimate goal of actorial creation according to the demands of psychological realism - in following the action, Gaskell's actor is, due to the continuous deferral of such merging, engaged in the ever more tense co-play of experience and theoretical reflection<sup>22</sup> along the always vague borderline between actor's and dramatic pole of identity, within the same, but nevertheless divided psychological unit, the so-called actor-dramatic character. The more intensive the inner organic experiencing, the stronger the need for theory.

The co-play reaches its climax only when the tension between the dramatic and the actor's character, the force of merging and diverging, has been brought to the point of paroxysm. Only then can the powerful organic experience momentarily bring to a halt the ongoing process of actor's (and thus the spectator's) self-observation and formation. The most powerful impetus for such escalation of experience is death - the sacrifice of the dramatic character ends the ideal tragic action, transferring the participants in the co-play into a state of self-oblivion.

In this decisive Moment, when the flow of experiential impulses, the riveting acts (Gaskell) is at its most effective, the achieved intensity of experience dissolves the very normative structure which produced it. However, as soon as the intensity of experience loosens due to the spontaneous inner theoretical reaction (i.e. immediately after death), and the new break and difference cause a new and more intensive drive for self-reflection, of ever wider scope and greater (self-)creative effect, the players might, abandoning the old norm, be able to "find a new light in which to observe" themselves, and thus "a new plenitude" of their "own personality" (Gaskell 1967: 167).

But if it is possible to separate discursively the organic experience of action from the theoretical re-action in the privileged moment of *Mé*, the discharge of experience from the new insight of theory, can the same be done in terms of perception? The powerful organic experience, which caused the momentary self-oblivion, is actually connected, according to Gaskell, with the highest point of concentration, the maximally "heightened feeling of oneself" - the actor-spectator and the spectator-actor are in a state of strictly controlled total/unconsciousness.

Gaskell's new actor, as well as the new spectator, is a character approaching the ideal personality, who with every new completion of the tragic dramatic character in its deaths - such scenes providing him with a complete and fulfilled other - under new light observes, experiences, controls, concentrates, forms, develops his/her-self, works - "towards the aesthetic and social responsibility of our own creation" (ibid.: 98).

<sup>22</sup> The chapter 3 summarises some of the key concepts developed in *Timing the Vague: Gaskell's Theoretical New Actor-Spectator* in the issue of *Foakes*.

<sup>23</sup> - arising from the working of the inner spectator (see also the introductory part (1.1) of the essay).

Can Karmov, *Deathrent / Moulin Rouge* approach the responsibility Gaviella's theory posits as the purpose - or as the utopian perspective - of actorial-spectatorial (self-)location, and thus of theatrical creation? It would seem there is no basis for transposing Brezovic's strategy into Gaviella's theory.

From a culturalogical point of view, in the era of postmodernist aesthetically and socially responsible artistic creation that does not put in doubt each and every stable structure (mental, social...), identify (individual, collective...), or a value system, necessary for producing a tragic action (a new tragedy) and its hero, must seem to be hopelessly steeped in some realism - i.e. mechanism of re-producing (re-)producing ideological constructions - or other.

Moreover, the dissolution of the tragic in the highly conventional genre such as musical (however iconoclastically deformed and contaminated) forces Brezovic to break one of Gaviella's main conditions: the fourth wall, "the illusion of the absence of the spectator" (Gaviella 1967: 169). For the convention of the musical demands precisely the kind of performance Gaviella deems particularly dangerous: the actor's 'visible addressing of his playing towards the present spectator' (ibid: 167).

As we have seen, contamination is the global strategy in Karmov and goes beyond genres. The contamination of performative-representational planes results in a hyper-theatrical mixture that leaves no room for doubt: over against realism, hyper-theatricality creates the illusion (functional, as we shall see) of the fourth wall by means of the illusion of difference between the staged nightmarish of isolated theatre and the dream-like illusion of an ordered and stable (hyperreal) world. Because of this Karmov can indulge - *pace* Gaviella - in a play that insists on the illusion of complete psycho-physical presence of the spectator. In order to begin the performance at the level of extreme intensity and produce a most powerful effect of dislodging the spectator from the vantage point (of view) he is occupying.

Put into words, Brezovic's problem might seem too simple, but trying to test it in performance is a perilous - perhaps even desperate - endeavour: what remains of the theatre in the total (non) theatre?

Does it work on making its isolation (in contrast to realism) visible by the expansion of the hypertheatre mean nothing but to reproduce and fortify the institution of theatre with all its functions and capital and to accept the illusion? Or does the visible and emphatic isolation, making use of every occasion to doubt, after all warn of the seriousness and the extent of the cracks in the (let us call it - *rise*) space-time, and therefore also of the rigidity of the frame of the new, into the crack inserted, time-space - as space-time within space-time, theatre within world-theatre, the double of the model of culture (within culture), the situation within situation, the sign (of the sign) within sign, this phenomenon (experience, practice, situation) not only demonstrates doubling, it also makes visible the disturbing scar-tissue: pointing to gap and separation.

This emphatic isolation is doubly important: it prevents the transformation of hypertheatre into total (non) theatre which overflows outside theatre (as art, institution) and becomes a metaphor or even a means of openly repressive or thinly veiled totalitarianism. Moreover, the pronounced, naked lack of isolation - including all the conventions, illusions, institutions, situations - of the theatre makes up for the absence of Gaviella's normative, authoritative, total, linear, continuous structure of ideal action,<sup>38</sup> and for the absence of contents that - due to their cultural, historical, traditional, mythical, social or simply political relevance, power and representative character, should be placed beyond all doubt.

Having no foothold in the normative, authoritative, sufficiently representative content and the ideal (tragic) action, necessary for the process of articulation, directing, expressing, spreading and emphasising the organic experience of the material, on the part of both actors and spectators, Brezovic is left with nothing but theatre. His high-risk strategy: all systems, planes, texts, contents, actions, discourses, of life or death, stories, styles, genres, devices, registers, spirals (including the iconoclastic one) all the arts, references, associations, interpretations, producing Karmov are first hypertrophied, then turned into mere matter through hypertheatricalisation, and finally conflated into a heterogeneous mass through contamination. The actual effect of each ingredient, deformed by the medium, before all on the affective sphere of reception, is ruthlessly exhausted by means of external intensification and by means of the unscrupulous attack on the intimated/deadened senses - especially by the sound (music), light, dynamism, movement, dimensions, planes, depth, mass and flesh - impressed on the organism of the actor and his co-player.

Even provided that outside emphasis can cause the experience meltdown and that the pronounced isolation of the hypertheatre will secure the stability needed for the normative, authoritative and representative structure - if only of a theatre situation,<sup>39</sup> deferring total identification (merging) and thus nothing experience, at the same time defining its trajectory (actor-spectator-actor) and form (the art of theatre), one question remains open: who must die - if only symbolically? - in order for the moment of total experience to occur...

The character Karmov is killed already at the beginning - by the musical. Karmov therefore must strike directly at the actor and the spectator. The constant pressure of outside effects yanks you out of endurance, and at certain moments, progressively increasing during the performance, you can really feel that the hypertheatrical explosion causes your organism to fall apart.<sup>40</sup> Can the cruel onslaught of hypertheatre push the actor and the spectator into shock, a psychophysical disturbance verging on death, so that in this bizarre complex we could have the exceptional experience Gaviella described as the self-oblivion ii - we might add - momentary advent of total non-theatre? If this does happen, can the experience of shock-death-oblivion caused by theatre and in the theatre, as Gaviella's theory would have it, really



<sup>38</sup> but also the structure of thought: characters style, genre, aesthetics or ideological formation.

<sup>39</sup> which makes it necessary for the spectators and the actors to be separated from the plot.

<sup>40</sup> allegedly one of the actors suffered heart failure mid-song and collapsed on stage, so the performance had to be stopped.

reactively produce such an effect: to bring about the determination of self-reflective creativity and the self-orientation naming critical awareness and reducing the abysses of total (non) theatre we can fall into without ourselves, outside i.e. without the institution of theatre, which, however, includes the risk of however momentary self-cancellation<sup>42</sup> and exposes itself to the possibility of being lost?

<sup>42</sup> - according to Gavetti and Brzozewski a Karmov's can happen only in the instant of total experience

How do you check any response during the performance?

The only thing that seems lively - the theatre that resists realism and its institution cause by its very isolation the doubling (inner and outer), and such an experience constantly brings us back to the disturbing scar indicating fissure, where doubt and questions come from. For example:

What if the actor is only taking the edifice of experience, and the spectator observing only his own desire for exceptional experiencing?

Can the fake play produce such exceptional experience of the theatre described by Gavetti as a "new relationship towards reality", "joy of creation", "new light", "general raising of the value of human life", "new feeling of life", even "new theatre"?

At one point, still at the beginning of Karmov, an actress stands apart at the very edge of the stage: her body is stiff, her gaze directed towards the audience, her hands pressed to her chest - song, tears rolling down the stony face. Has the song caused some personal recollection and its experiential potential by means of affective memory? Or do the tears express the joy of creation, eagerly awaited by the acting personality, at the very beginning of the hypertheatre breakthrough? Or, are the tears merely stage effects, while underneath - as the song says - there is nothing more?

In Gavetti's theory there is no dilemma: when a "new acting personality" is formed, which will be "transparent, devoid of every lie and pretence" it will "be able to secure the reliable connection with the observer and give the actor the security that all the work he has performed on his own material would find a faithful echo in the sensation of the spectator" (1967: 150). But Brzozewski works with real actors and spectators. And in the era of new theatre, which cannot forgo the doubt in the possibility of the ideal and faithful, and thus in the intentions of those who would provide such things. The contamination of various layers of motivation, intention and disposition of the acting performance is not only a necessity but also an important decision in the director's strategy: honesty, deceit, joy are inextricably entwined in the actor's work. Instead of condemning deceit and demanding honesty, Brzozewski counts on the actual effect of the whole complex of actor's work, a paradoxical (at least) double, both inner and normative (inter)action of inner-free play and outside representational matrix: while the contamination of individual (actor's) communities in the collective creative act counts on the actual effect of the work of exceptional (actor's) community as a powerful whole intensifying the experience.

The end of Karmov presents a new reversal: a break, a distance, a difference. Karmov has passed away, the stage disappears in darkness, the music fades. The pause, darkness and silence last a few nauseating seconds, and then, suddenly, the light floods the stage and the audience, with the song blessing, *The South Blues*, as the actors, relaxed, gleeful and merry, light the cigarettes, eat ham and sing together. Obviously, they no longer represent fictional characters, but are they still acting? On which representation-al plane is this little festivity taking place? And what is the occasion. The success of the actual work? The inner free play? Decontamination? The exceptional togetherness of creation and performing? Karmov? Karmov? (The new?) life after the experiential overload of hypertheatre just endured? The co-play? Theory? Pure joy? The end? The beginning? Maybe even the new fullness of one's own personality; the work on the self as the new (acting) personality?

<sup>43</sup> of a new cycle of performances: for example

If the answer to some of the questions is affirmative, does that mean that in the effect of the performance some of Gavetti's theory has been actualised? Or is it all still just external intensification?

What if the impression of collective creation is meant but to conceal the methods of manipulation - aesthetic, ideological, even political? Is the new reversal one more empty effect, another discursive decision successfully carried out, a piercing ironic glance at those drowning in the hypnotic waves of the tepid encephal Southern Sun, or is it produced by the actor's experiential material and self-reflection, by the co-play within an exceptional community, of actors and spectators, inside the isolated / exclusive institution of the theatre, and eventually, perhaps, outside it as well? Does the new reversal open the production towards the outside play, the play of actual role reversal in the theatre situation? Judging by the performances so far, this remains in the domain of *Hieraplay*.

## 2.9., 1.9.

In the theatre produced by Brzozewski, the director is the privileged instance that can decide and respond, but nothing guarantees him the right to the final decision and response: action and re-action, both outer and inner, in the end do depend only on the actor and the spectator, as long as they remain isolated - free to (re-)double and (dis)re- (in)fecting but the theatre. It is because of this that the hypertheatre of Karmov, *Deathwrit / Moulin Rouge* in its extremes only resembles terrorist action and totalitarian practice localised in the theatre, terrorism and totalitarianism can become a strategy and a means to their own abolition (not only in the theatre). An exceptional, total experience is not only a heaven or a little ground for manipulation, it can also become an impetus to a theoretical (self-) reflection, i.e. critical awareness and

<sup>44</sup> The actor's performance is pre-determined on the level of sign, means and even style of expression: his actual doing are mostly defined by the director and his decision-making process: but the experiencing and self-reflection come about according to actor's own sensitively technical mastery, expressivity and determination. Finally, the actor can pan in the histories or simply leave the stage, having sung his part. That fact becomes obvious after the new reversal.



possible resistance. Beszovec stops at nothing in order to find out whether theatre still has this power but the limits of his directorial power are not obfuscated by the illusion of connoisseurial omnipotence.<sup>46</sup>

The explosive charge of the performance would then raise the spectator above the function of mere recipient-consumer: but, will the spectator simply give up, but of anger or lack of interest? Absorption himself to the seduction of hypertheatre and down in the wide blue yonder the song evokes? Or will he choose the inner co-play, which might cause a temporary death, but at the same moment the maximally heightened sense of self will be the new light (Gavella)? Can such an exceptional experience of the spectator who refuses to drown either in realism or in the wide blue yonder, finally become conducive to action, or, as Gavella (1993) would say, to a responsible creation of an exceptional community? Do we have to spell its name?

The risk of response is a political risk, unavoidable in Beszovec's productions, but still no more lasting than the snows of yesterday – is all responsibility still in the responses? Or is it rather in the the open questions as well?

In the new reversal, *Kamok: Deathward / Moulin Rouge* finally takes the risk of the open questions:

The challenges of all these doubts – the fact that we are still wondering – creates the hope that the theatre can cause an eruption of experience-theory that sheds the light – not, like catharsis, on some ideological matrix, but – on the interactive area of uncertainty; perhaps like the one in *Hampel* before the well-cur-tain is raised, wherein we test our (self-)perception, our isolation-doubling, taking full responsibility for every such act, over against both total and non-theatre

Or, all that remains for the theatre is the staging of its own death, in explosion or in the darkness and silence at the end of *Hampel*? There are no doubts there, all that remains, as the song goes, is a house somewhere, abandoned empty by the sea, from a bygone world, and nothing more, nothing more, nothing more

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# Povratak tigrića koji je izgubio svoje pruge

Dnevnički zapis o radionici Goat Islanda održanoj 11.11.2002. u Zagrebu

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Mojih nekoliko pokušaja da napišem tekst o zatvorenoj zagrebačkoj radionici školske izvedbene skupine Goat Island, održanoj po završetku simpozija *Volatile Incomprehensible*, na kojem je Matthew Goulsh participirao svedbom teksta *Neanness*, propeli su i prije nego što su se približili prici za realizaciju. Pokazalo se da je ključ neuspjeha ležao u perimetrima koje sam postavila pred tekst, koj su predimenzirali objektivnost, cjelovitost, dosljednost i ono teoretsko-znanstvenog diskursa i analitičarovog habitus, a za koje sam smatrala da su primjereni temi. No u slučaju Goat Islanda i njegovih članova, Matthewa Goulsha i Lin Hixon, koji su vodili radionicu, nisam se mogla odrići unutar vlastitih krugova. Oni su, po svojoj ograničavajućoj i skupoj prirodi, bili suprotni naglašenij tendenciji Goat Islanda da svojom radom prožmu ono što se određuje i odziva kao kazališna teorija s jedne strane i kazališna praksa s druge strane. Moje su rečenice, tako, neprestano lebjele nad subjektivnošću i osobnim impresijama, promičući se u dnevnički intencionirani zapis. Osim odsustvovanja od članka, najprije ostajalo drugo, no u potpunosti se odričući ograničenja i psati unutar goatlandskog prostora, ne na granici teorije i prakse, subjektivnog i objektivnog, običnog i začudnjucog, već u njihovoj procjepu.



Moje zanimanje i oduševljenje radom Goat Islanda i njihovim promišljanjem teatra započelo je 1999. g., kada sam na zagrebačkom Eurokazu svjedočila<sup>1</sup> izvedbi njihove predstave *See & Passon*.

Sjedim u prvom redu, osjećam toplinu izvođača koji krvar iz glave i nastavlja istjerivati otrov iz tijela bestranim skokovima, još, i još, i još, neslućućem galnu, ali je ne želim priznati, nastupim pred drugim gledateljima koji gledaju kako ulančivim otrovinama jagode na tzeranje u plikadu. Dvije godine nakon što većin ispred mene još uvijek stoji lip u liku vode i čita antrinalno pismo.

I tada sam se, kao i sada, nalila pred zidom da napišem analizu viđenog i doživljenog, i tada sam, kao i sada, mogla napisati tek regrestino. Tigrić bez prugica se vristo. Tigrić, predstava za djecu koja je puna tri godine mog životnog iskustva zbijuba u fastarsko teatro, ostavljajući pricu, puhanja i pletkanje postrance, taj se Tigrić nakon brojnih godina vratio kao performansi raz unutar posvokutnog izvedbenog prostora stani gimnastičke dvorane.

Ovo navodim kako bih približila kontekst unutar kojeg sam, s ostalim sudionicima (a koje su većinom člani članovi BADCO), krenula na jutarnju radionicu Goat Islanda u remetskoj Center za kulturu.

Prvih pola sata radionice zaštićeno sjedim u kutu. Školice bijelim ptičja, školice bijelim konstatacije. Zapisujem. Kako bi bilo uđ u postati bijelino?

Sjedim opale

Radičona je bila preprečenost demonstracija njihova procesa rada na predstavama, koji u prosjeku traju oko dvije godine. Dakako, nije bila riječ o demonstraciji ex cathedra, o njima rad i nema pod, već o kreativnom radu i istraživanju u kojem se osjetilo nenamjetljivo i prirodno upajanje i proširavanje teorije i prakse

Kao da sam se našla sred Goulishave knjige *In proximity of performance* ili njihovih zajedničkih dnevničkih zapisa OVZVLG<sup>2</sup> koj sada postaju moj

Ishodna točka procesa bila je ona od koje članovi Goat Island kreću u rad na predstavama, impossible event/action. Svaki sudionik je obješao i zapisao nezvedivu/nemoguću radnju za koju je, potom, drugi sudionik trebao znati način izvedbe. Nisu postavljali limiti, niti dane upute o kakvoju je nemogućnost riječ, niti kako je treba omogućiti

Nastojm izvesti nezvedivo

Nastojm omogućiti nemoguće

Nezvedivost postaje izvediva, nemoguće moguće: dišem bez mask i egzistiram na osam mjesta istovremeno

Za izricanje nezvedivog svako je sudionik stvorio (stvarao) vlastiti izvedbeni jezik, te ga je, vođen, kroz limitacije vremena, ponašanja i viziranja strahovao i kondenzirao

Ako je prozrača z mog ljeta, moram naučiti stiva rečenice moje ruke

Moje desna ruka postaje entitet

Bole me naskojenice

Učenje izvedbenog jezika<sup>3</sup> sastavni je dio Goat Islandovih predstava i podrazumjeva gledateljevo istovremeno prepuštanje (pristanak na) i aktivno suđenje/vođenje. Učenje jezika se odvija ponašanjem. No ponašanje ne postoji. Ono stari je uvijek novo

Do tekstualnog materijala dolazimo tako da unutar zadanoj vremenskoj perioda svatko od nas odgovara na Martheova pitanja

Teorija nije u onoj debeljoj knjizi s neodoljima

Nije postaje obična pitanje

Što je pogrešan odgovor?

Dalje smo vođeni (nedodoljivi) principima koje se inače mogu upoznati u predstavama Goat Island: nismo započeli unaprijed određenim konceptom, nismo znali kako će "izvedba" izgledati u konačnici, ni u sadržajnom, izvedbenom, niti u strukturnom smislu

Kakve veze ima jedno s drugim?

Fragmenti teksta, pokreta, intencija i tumačenja, dolazila u različite međudodose, napuštajući svog tvorca i mijenjajući vlasnika, počeli su stvarati neodoljiva veze, kontraste, cjeline. Materijal je prespavao sam sebe i upravljač vlastitim upravljanjem

Ne znam čje je ovo rečenica

Pravdan izvod mog čučanja. Sada je to njegov čučanj. Ali i moj čučanj

Podijeli smo se u manje, nehijerarhijski organizirane skupine i počeli smo raditi zajedno: svi smo bili upravljači i upravljeni smo. Pri tome se u potpunosti izgubilo podrijetlo izvedbenih elemenata, ako je karakter njihove izvori do kraja ostao očigledan. U pozadini je stajalo ono nemoguće, neznavno, a mi smo ga odgovarali

Običan opale

Pravdan jede jabuku, nikle sprema kasetafon

Nema kraja

<sup>1</sup> Goat Island postavlja gledatelja u poziciju stvarnog svjedoka. O tome ukaže gledatelja pila i Tim Schels u knjizi *Certain Fragments*

<sup>2</sup> "Performance employs the concept and experience of the live event as a way to release our obligations to the stories we witness in reality usually absent the representational or the mediated" (str. 18)

<sup>3</sup> Goat Island Collaborative Journal Project OVZVLG (Chicago - Vienna - Zagreb - Vienna - London/Chicago) (Frakopp 2002; 2001)

<sup>4</sup> " (...) all languages of acting are highly metaphorical (...) necessary inadequate and therefore provisional. Thus, all languages of acting need to be constantly reconsidered in relation to the particular context of their use and the degree to which all language can help us to make sense of the complexities of the body/mind's relationship to action/acting (...) We can celebrate the freedom of not having to find a universal language once for all. Rather we can spend our energy on the continuing challenge of searching for languages of acting which best allow one to actualize a particular paradigm of performance in a particular context for a particular purpose." (P. B. Davis: *Acting* (Reconsidered, str. 16; 1992)

# Što može (ili hoće) kazališna teorija?

## Teorija kao prevođenje

Josette Féral

S francuskoga preveo Srdan Ristić

*Ala ne prevodimo,*

*Ala ne predstavljamo,*

*Odustajemo od života*

*du Journales Châtel, br. 10, veljača 1993*

### Teorija nije više što je nekad bila

U knjizi naslovljenoj *The Point of Theory* Meke Bal i Inge E. Boer (1994) zajedno s drugim autorima<sup>1</sup> analiziraju situaciju o funkcijama koje u suvremenju književnost, kulturu ili umjetnost teorija još uvijek može zauzimati. Iako se njezin članak ne odnosi na kazalište, neke tuda formirane primjedbe vrijede i za teatrološke studije.

Za početak valja promisliti boszoni, nepovjerenje, da ne kažemo strah koji više ne kad ispizve svake teorijske pristup. Primarno na polju književnih studija, to je nepovjerenje još više kod praktičara na kazališnom području. Oni za svoje praktično djelovanje često ne vide nikakvu trenutnu korist u tim sofisticiranim teorijskim razradama koje njihov rad nastavljaju u savršeno homogene komadiće i sustave, sve u svemu, prilično udaljene od postupaka i konceptata koj se nalaze u osnov njihovih kreativnog djelovanja. Žalito bi ondje čine napore da prođu u te sustave sličnih konstrukcija? I ako barem djelomično objašnjavaju dočvrstano djelo, li se sustavi često nisu u stanju baviti djelom u nastajanju. Taj je problem još i danas neriješen.

Teorija je neugodna i po izvaju praksi, s jedne strane zbog toga što prema njoj postaje predstava koje neke društvo gaj prema intelektualnim konstrukcijama, a s druge strane zato što razne teorije ponekad izgledaju kao nizovajve utvrde. One često koriste razgranatu mrežu riječi, konceptata, struktura i načina mišljenja koji su ponekad opskumi i u koje se lak teško može upustiti bez vodiča. Uzrok u utvrdu zahtijeva velike napore čija opina ne odgovara uvijek dobivenim rezultatima. Osim toga, paralelno postojie mnogobrojne utvrde, i nije moguće odrediti prelaze iz jedne u drugu. Put koj vodi do svake od njih je jednostavn, dugačak i često veoma strm. Dakle, svaki put valja znova poduzeti novi napor za svaku od odabranih utvrda i pristupa.

Dodajmo tim povjerenim primjedbama i opasku Jonathana Cullera koju je on iznio u svom uvodu *The Point of Theory*, i dobit ćemo sažeti prikaz razloga koji motiviraju otpor pojedinaca prema teoriji:

Jedne od najneugodnijih karakteristika teorijskih konstrukcija osamdesetih godina jest činjenica da one nemaju kraja [...] Teorijska praksa može izgledati opskumi, čak i teoristički zbog sve veće količine koju implicira [...] Nesposobnost da se teoriji absurdi predstavlja jedan od vodećih uzroka otpora koji joj se pruža [...] Jedan od neprijateljstva koji teorija izaziva bez ikakve sumnje proizlazi iz činjenice što važnost teorije implicira beskrajni angažman i nužnost privoćanja da će nam neko važni aspekti znanja uvijek izmamiti (Culler, 1994: 14)<sup>2</sup>

Dakle, svatko tko se upusti u teorijsko područje treba biti dovoljno skroman da prizna da tim područjem nikada neće u potpunosti prići, te da će mu čitave slojeve znanja neminovno izmisliti. To je zakonitost ljudske konačnosti.

Tim givim konstatacijama koje čak ni danas ne osjemo umanjiti, predajmo se dublje razlici koji su povezani s evolucijom samih povijesnih strujanja posljednjeg desetljeća. Naime, nakon osvajanja



1. To su: Jonathan Culler, Brian Monte, Norman Bryson, Elizabeth Diller, Barbara Hersch, Seth Shusterman, Michael Ann Holly, Evelyn Fox Keller i drugi.

2. Čitate koji su u Osnovu izvedeni na engleskom Josette Féral je u biblioteci preveo na hrvatski da donosi hrvatski prevod s francuskog jezika. Op. prev.



eksplozije teorije šestdesetih i sedamdesetih godina i imperijalizma koji ih je pratio, osamdeseto se godine objebljuje izustavljanje istraživač i kritičan postaju svjerski da se u toj fantastičnoj eksploziji teorije koja je nesumnjivo uzdimala naše načine mišljenja i pristupa djelima pomalo izgubilo upravo djelo samo, da je ono često postalo samo odgovor za složene razrade koje s izvornim djelom održavaju samo daleke veze. Naše polazišne u određene osvajačke teorijske sustave pokazale su se uzaludnim, napredak nije bio uvijek moguć. Posebice imamo na umu strukturalizam i semologiju. Istraživač su stao iz te znanstveničke želje koja je objebljala strukturalističko doba i ono koje je sjedilo odmah nakon njega, doba čije je pad označilo osvajačko semologije otkrivajući vlastitu nemogućnost da razumije i pročišćuje drukčikom strogošću kakvom je željela. To praznjenje poraza omogućilo je opće nepovjerenje u globalizirajuće teorije, koje danas odražava nepovjerenje nadlež doba prema značajnim teorijama totalitarnih pretenzija.

Normalno je, dakle, da je putanje konjirane i da su ugledali svjetlo dane drugi pristupi, svakome u svojim ambicijama.

## Pristup koji karakterizira pluralnost

Promjene su se, dakle, dogodile u pogledu teorije, njezine uloge, onoga što se od nje očekuje. Od nje se sada više ne traži da sva objasni i sve objasni. Ona može biti fragmentarna i parcijalna, ne mora više odgovoriti na sva pitanja, već samo pomoći da se ona postave. Ona postaje instrument koji omogućuje propitivanje djela i njegovo istraživanje kako bi se pojavio ne jedan jedini smisao, već više njih koji u tom djelu borave.

Sad već postoji uverenje da ne postoji jedinstveni model koji omogućava razumijevanje sustava. Istraživač više nije u potrazi za modelima koje valja primjeniti, analitičkih tablica koje mu omogućuju otkrivanje različitih sustava i temeljnih struktura. On dekonstruira djelo.

Šin su koncepti zamjenjeni uža. Govor se o postmodernizmu, interkulturalizmu, kulturi. U svakom slučaju, pojmovi više ne ukazuju na jasno definirane pokrete uz koji bi teoretičan pristajao, kao što su to mogli kad se radilo o strukturalizmu, društvenoj kritici ili psihizmu. Oni u najboljem slučaju ukazuju na široke tokove preokupacije kojima sami umjetnici često ostaju strani.

Teorijske su reference, znači, došle do loga de porizaju na pluralnost. Mnogstvo manje dogmatskih pristupa zamijenilo je disciplinarnu teoriju posuđujući slobodno različitim disciplinama instrumente koji su im mogli biti potrebni: sociologije, antropologije, filozofije, znanosti.

Istraživanja i/ili Pngoginje i Isabelle Stengers predstavljaju primjere u tom smjeru, ali ne zato što nude modele koji bi se mogli ikonstitui u umjetničkom području. Oni su egzemplarni po samom postupku to dvoje znanstvenika koji se ne usružavaju zbog stojišnje barijera između znanosti i filozofije, koji u dijalog stavljaju Boltzmann i Bergsona, Schrödingera i Zenona i da bi postavili pitanje nepremijivosti toka vremena (1975, 1980). Međim također i na radove Jacquesa Monoda i Renesa Thoma.

Samo je u toj pluralnosti pristupa još uvijek moguće i danas promisliti teoriju.

## Teorije uspostavljaju neočekivane perspektive

Možda bismo se trebali na nekoliko trenutaka zaustaviti kako bismo pokušali odrediti što je "priroda" teorije, ako to pitanje uopće može imati smisla. Esencijalističko pitanje, netko će reći. Prihvatanje rizik.

Ovdje neću ponavljati razradu te teme koju sam napravila drugdje (Féral, 1985, 1993), pokušavajući prepoznati različita prihvaćanja nje i smisla koje nje "teorija" može imati za kazalište, nego ću se radnje osvrnuti na način na koji sami teoretičari upotrebljavaju taj pojam i "predmet".

Tekloče da se zaključiti takav koncept prolazi upravo u činjenici što je u umjetničkom, a pogotovo u kazališnom području taj koncept nejasan i što se bez razlike primjenjuje na istraživače koji promišljaju umjetničko djelo koje je već dovršeno i predstavljeno publici (radove Anne Ubersfeld, Marce de Maris, Thérèse de Laurens, na primjer), kao i na predstave koji pokušavaju teoretizirati vlastito znanje (Jouvet, Crag, Appia, Stanislavski, Meyerhold, na primjer).<sup>3</sup>

Mnogstvo teorijskih praksa dovodi, naravno, do zbrke oko tog pojma, ali ta zbrka predstavlja sastavni dio same teorije kad je primjenjivamo na kazališno i, još općenitije, na umjetničko područje. Kako bih razmislila tu konfuziju, pokušala sam na drugim mjestima napraviti razliku između teorije proizvodnje i teorije dovršenog djela, takozvanih analitičkih teorija.<sup>4</sup> Dakle, na stranicama koje slijede ograničit ću se na bavljenje samo analitičkim teorijama.

## Teorija omogućuje postavljanje pitanja

Ako teorija, kao što kaže Meke Bal, nije ni jezik, ni stvar, ni opina (1994: 8)<sup>5</sup>, ako, kao što kaže Jonathan Culler, teorija ne predstavlja u većoj mjeri teoriju nečeg pojedinačnog, nego što je teorija nečeg općenitog (1992: 13)<sup>6</sup>, ako teorija više nije skup spoznaja koje možemo stići i konstiti, onda dosta treba prihvatiti da teorija postoji samo kao važba mišljenja. Jonathan Culler kaže

3. Ne u ovom posljednjem slučaju prik-ljučni odnosi govore o tome je opću-ku većinu razumijevanja.

4. "Analitičke teorije često posu-od pro-mislenja reprezentacije. Njome se čito razumije predstavi i promjene pojmove koncepte struktura činele koje omogućuju stvaranje vizualnih zbiranja na scini i (prođu) razmjena koje se na nju dogode, od teksta do guma, od guma-za do gledatelja, od guma do arhitekta od tebi do glasa". Bionne predstavljaju mislu za se "razumije kazališno teorijom kao proces, a ne kao proizvod. One pokušavaju pročišćiti i metode kako bi praktično razlozi istu umjetnost. Njome je čit od određene veličine" (Féral, 1990: 68).

5. "Theory is not a language: not a thing not a whole."

6. "Teorija stvaraju u tom smislu je važna ista definicija: to nije teorija nečeg pojedinačnog, ne stvari općenito one se ne može definirati pojmovima, nečeg općenitog, nečeg sačinjav, već je je kao činjenice koje možemo postići i ne, kao predmeti koje možemo stvarati, postići i činjenice koje možemo stići i moći?"

7. "U konceptualizacijama naglašava dvije stvari. Ona u jednoj stvari insistira na činjenici da teorija nije sadržajna u sebi, nego je specifična teorija: namjerom teorija značenja kojim to ne dodaje teorija iskustva, teorija perspektive i tako dalje, u tom bi se stavu našlo o tome teorija koje doživljava kulturne teorije, koje bi se na nju nisu dodavali jedni drugima." [ 1 ]  
 8. Dvije stvari: ta komparacija između naglašava na činjenici da teorija barem u određenoj mjeri mora biti definirana u odnosu na vrijedni element, kao način razlikovanja koje njena greška odražava, kao i činjenici da drugačije razmišljanje svoj predmet i način razmišljanja.

9. To je već Jurdo i George Steiner u svojoj knjizi *After Babel*. Načini postojanja teorije, on je proučavao da svaka teorijska refleksija može postojati samo na metaforičkom principu. "Ne postaje teorija konceptualizacijom" ne postaje "teorija značenja". To sugrafične iskuste samo žele izdvojiti i predstavljaju patetično brzo povratu posuđenim iz bogatstva i neposrednosti znanosti i tehnike jezika znanosti. Tim više, i reči se ne bi svi trebali shvaćati, ne postaje "teorija predavanja". Ono čime razlikujemo na običnom opisu postupaka. U naprednom slučaju ono što nastaje i sam postupak, opisi predstavljaju naravno postavljenog slučaja. Načinistički i egzemplarni biskup radi u tekstu i svaki njegov postupak koji nemaju nikakvu znanstvenu vrijednost. Neki instrumenti perspektive nisu teorije, ni riječi postaju u znanstvenom smislu. Što drugo, razlika iznad da se mogu faktički vidjeti. Ono što je znanstveni "način razmišljanja".

10. "U tom smislu teorija predstavlja prilično slobodno interpretaciju, koje ne predstavlja toliko eksperimentalno objektivnost, koliko istu subjektivnost, koje nije objektivna, već empirijska sudbina".

11. Jednako kao i ostale teorije, koje su pod imenom teorije označavaju beskonačno korpus djela koje uspješno dovodi u pitanje i preusmjeravaju na drugi način prema drugom području, osim onih kojima su oboje namijenjeni, zbog toga što analiza jezika, mentaliteta, povijesti i kulture kakvu nude prate perspektive novih i izvrsnih značenja, koje neobdano čine običnim, a čitaviji navode na predio koje ga postaju da drugačije razmišljanje (1992: 203)

U tom smislu, dodaje Culler, teorija uopće ne predstavlja supostavljanje posebnih teorija, već mora imati praktične efekte, a pogotovo predstavlja ono što omogućuje da se neki predmet sučava sa drugačijim značenjima (str. 137)

12. Meke Bal ne kaže ništa drugo kad tvrdi da teorija funkcionira po modulu metafora<sup>13</sup>, odnosno prema što "nomadskog koncepta" (izraz je preuzet od Isabelle Stengers) koji se smješta na pokretnom mjestu između disciplina, "pokretnom" zbog toga što se ne može lokalizirati na jednom mjestu, "nomadskom" zbog toga što se istražuje njime koristi sukladno vlastitim potrebama. Poput metafora, i teorija bi tako ispunjavala određene zaista specifične funkcije: ona bi imala važnu kognitivnu ulogu, pogotivno bi se premyetljavim značenjima, stvaranjem novih značenja, razvijala bi nove elemente, uvela bi neosvojene perspektive zadržavajući da bude uočljiva, vizu između novog i starog značenja.

Teorija će se tako, dakle, pojaviti kao praksa, kao oblik interpretacije. Budući da je ne objektivna objektivnost, ona će prvo poslužiti kao test za subjektivnost koja će se pak useliti u zbiljskosti (Bal, 1994: 47)<sup>14</sup>

Elizabeth Bronfen kaže da je za nju "učinak teorijske perspektive izoštravanje pogleda. Najamni obrisi novih objektivnih dogmova koji su se međusobno preklapali odjednom su postali bistri, ako je svaka nova pogled stvario nove podkategorije koje su opet zahtijevale stari proces redefiniranja" (1994: 287). Šeip Stuehman primjećuje: "Proučavati neki subjekt bez teorijskih pogmova bilo bi kao da se ne planira uspjehom razumijevati kretnost: mogli bismo se uspeti, no valje u izgled da bismo ostali zarobljeni u nešto još gore" (1994: 290-291).

13. Ista ta primjedba mogla bi se nastaviti unedogled, ali ono što od ove čitavosti pristupa više upućuje jest da se čini da je teorija definitivno izgubila ono što je u njezinim počecima predstavljalo prvotno opravdanje: nužnost da se uspostave temelji analitičke znanosti stvarajući metode istraživanja, te djelotvornih i kvalitativnih alata koji omogućuju prodor u dubinu proučavanog djela i njegovo navođenje na govori.

14. Dosta to više nije slučaj. Funkcija teorija više je usmjerena na ukazivanje novih aspekata nekog djela ili kazališnog komada konfrontaciju: ga s različitim znanjima, ponekad slučajima, podguravaju ga različitim diskursima, promatranjima ga iz raznih perspektiva kako bi se pojavile nove pitanja i kako bi se razmišljanje proširilo da ode još dalje. Topički, mogli bismo reći da ona u djelu stvara značenja, otvara putove i otkriva nove smjerove.

15. Drugim riječima, teorija je prepušta mjesto teorijama, kojih je više, u mnogo različnih oblika, te koje su često aspiacijone.

## Teorija je praksa

Ako je to dosta slučaj, kakva se onda može napraviti razlika između teorije i umjetničke prakse? Jer, jedna praksi da se sve ono što smo isle za teoriju prenamjeru i na praksi i praksi, barem u području teorije, ostala predstavlja mjesto konfrontacije znanje, kontakta raznih znanja posuđenih od različitih područja, to eksperimentiranje s tim istim znanjima u djelu koje se upravo zbira. Primjerice, redatelj sudben s tekstom koji mora postaviti na scenu i sam podgledava taj tekst različitom perspektivom koje razvijaju različita pitanja, a koji mu pak omogućuju da iz njega izvuče i svi moguća značenja. Ciljano, na primjer, što kaže Antoine Vitez u svojoj volji mizanscena i rada na tekstovima.

Mizanscena razno predstavlja kritiku autora (1991: 270)

Što se svodi na to da smatramo da nam sve što je napisano od samog iskona smisla pripada i da to moramo - to je od najveće važnosti - opet i uvijek postavljati na sceni i neprestano započeti novi znova. Djelo predstavljaju anigne na koje moramo neprestano odgovarati. To je istina tak i u slučaju kad izgleda da neko remek-djelo kazališne riječi i glume dugo odgovara na sve pitanja koje smo u postavili (str. 293)

Kakav je [ ] mjesto suradnje i rada društva na vlastitom jeziku i vlastitim gestama. Proučava se laboratorij jezika i gesti nacije (str. 294)

Ako u Vitezovu poziciju rado prihvaća veliki broj kazališnih redatelja, i ako Vitez, kao što ćemo kasnije vidjeti, kazališnu misao smatra prevodivom, može li se ipak reći da svako različito razum stvara i teorijsko djelo?

Odgovor nije jednostavan i, naravno, ovisno o različitim praksiama. Postavljaju ipak to pitanje ne zam ovdje negirati uočljivu dhotornu između prakse i teorije svoditi sličnost problema na samo jednu razinu promišljanja, već jednostavno smatrati tu podjelu koja između teorije i prakse neprestano postoji. S napadom "srednjoj" teorija - kao što bi Gianni Vattimo (1985) govori o snažnim





ranim sustavima. Subjektivnost strahačva još je uvijek na djelu. Tako upotreba još da se rezultat postupka nadzice ovisno o konfimen metodama i pojedincima koji se u njih upuštaju.

Ono što podržava tu kontradikciju unutar samog postupka prevodenja jest činjenica da prevodičlike čim nužno nametne distancu. Ako je krajnji cilj prevoditelja zadržati intenciju duha izvornog djela, njegove poezije i smisla, ipak se on u svom radu ne može izbaviti iz situaciji da također naglašava i njegova ograničenja i teškoće. Pri tom on strano uvodi u besiko, te dovodi do toga da se iz starog poznajaju novo. Naravno, prevoditelj djeluje baš na taj pokušaj: između već poznatog i nepoznatog, između priznanog i nepriznanog, između onog što u jeziku teko protan i onoga što mu zmeđe. On dakle razotkriva tenzije djela, stavlja ga u pokret.

Knjevrnost se u prevodu predstavlja kao replika tekstova koji već postoje. Ona upravo zato nužno prihvataju točku promatranja. Svaki se prevod može svesti na originalni tekst koji mu odgovara. Na taj se način može videti što su prevoditelji stavili u pokret [ ]  
Prevodenje je mjesto sprečavanja i napetost par excellence. Ono po prirodi stvari stvara razlike. Ono upravo zbog toga za istraživanje diskurzivnih fenomena i njihove institucionalne vremenjskosti predstavlja privilegijano područje promatranja (Briset, 1990. 28)

"Stvoreni razlike", označiti "napetost" u sučavanom djelu govoreći o teoriji, pojmovi koje koristi Culler upotrebu nisu različiti i on evocira činjenicu da teorija "biskio čini stranom, da nas ona privlači da neš predmet sučavanja drugogje zamisli" (1993. 1319). Kao i prevodenje, kao i razmišljanje, i ona predstavlja trinitarnu, triadizaciju, kreativnu transpoziciju reprezentacije. Kao i prevodenje, i ona podržava odnose koji bi inače ostali nedostupni pogledu ili sluhu gledatelja, govornika ili čitaatelja. Ona stvara odnos unutar same reprezentacije, uvlači se između predmeta i gledatelja, prousmjera njegov pogled istražuje otpornost djela, ispljuje njegov raspon. Njezin je glavni cilj dovesti do toga da naša zaklupci u sustavima i praksama koje napada.

Taj proces razvijetavanja ipak ne može biti iscrpan. S jedne strane, čitava područja prakse neminovno izmđu tom postupku "prelaza". S druge strane, proces zahtijeva da se naprave dva odabira: teoretičar i prevoditelj predviđaju, podržavaju glavne osi, odabirući preferencije, vrše odabire koji postavlja druge aspekte kojim se za istraživanja čini manje zanimljivim i manje opasnim. Činjenica da razlike i asimetrije i dalje postoje i ostanu neistražene ne može čuditi. To su granice svakog prevoda.

Teorija, kao i prevodenje, tako predstavlja igru odvijanja i maske u kojoj odabirni sustav ovise kako o primjenjenim teorijskim modelima, tako i o subjektivnosti strahačva.

Da mu u tom procesu prevodenja promđu čiji sigle zbije nije nešto čudno. Još je Aristotel primijetio da nježi u kojem slučaju ne mogu biti savršeni odraz stvarnosti. A Michel Foucault, koji se bavio poviješću djela tijekom stoljeća, pokazao je kako su se s vremenom neko polako odvojile od stvar i postale sumnjive.

Anne Brisset je govornica o prevodu kao o replici postojećih tekstova: smatraju pod tim da prevedeno djelo - jednog stvaralačkog teksta - u sebi također nosi svoj stvaralački do i ne taj način predstavlja dvojnika koji je istodobno i sličan i različit originalnom djelu. U tom se svjetlu upotrebu ne pojavljuje teorijsko promišljanje o nekom djelu. Primijenjeno na stvaralaštvo, ono prevodi djelo, naravno, ali to prije svega radi uz pomoć interpretacije, propitivanja. Ono ga istražuje, fragmentira, premješta. Činjenica da se objekt promatran u svojoj cjelovitosti pomalo gubi u toj potrazi ne predstavlja nešto neobično. Gubitak se događa između same kazališne reprezentacije i govora o istoj.

Tako, ako je nemoguće u svakom prevodu doseći stvarnu smetnju, adekvatno primijeti jedan simetrični sustav u drug (prijelaz jednog jezika u drugi, jednog diskurzivnog sustava u drugi), treba s još većim pravom prenatih da nije moguće postići savršenu jednakost između dva tako različita konceptualna sustava kakve mogu biti kazališna predstava i teorija koja je analizira. Ovdje djeluje proces entropije koji dovodi do toga da uvijek postoji neka vrsta gubitka.

Očito je da taj dugačak proces dikira želja da se bolje razumiju fenomeni, ali tu želju kod teoretičara prati i želja da se postavi djelo. No u tom hitanju postaju rizičnim raz koji je Steiner dobro primijetio.

Kako svako objašnjenje predstavlja odobavanje, ono se ne zadovoljava time da reformulira originalno jedinstvo, već mu mora dodati i ekspllicitni konvokst, poje kontrastnih i taktilnih razgranatost, upravo zbog toga prevodenje postaje uz pomoć povećanja. [ ] U ovom prodrom obliku, prevod nadzice original (1998. 378).

Teorija ne izmiče taj opasnost koju Steiner pri prevodenju naglašava. Ona uvijek nadzice original, preljeve se preko njegovih rubova, obuhvaća ga, često se stih njime da bi umislila druge putove. Naravno, onkva prvotne pretenzije teoretičara kojemu je cilj suočiti se s početnim djelom da bi otvoreo njegove aspekte, strukture, skrivene zakonitosti, često se pojavljuje želja da istraživanja odu još dalje, prema izgradnji složenijih i obuhvatnijih sustava u kojima izvorno djelo, naravno, ima svoje mjesto, ali marginalno. Pletena vrbica u zajaž.

Tako glade teorijskog diskursa nikako neće biti moguće raditi ono što je Steiner primijetio u vezi s prevodom, a to je da ovaj posljednji ne postaje "umjesto" već "na mjestu" originalnog teksta (str. 271). Teorijske konstrukcije su osuđene da postoje potkraj djela, poput priloge koji bacaju odloženo sjeme, koje je zasigurno različito, ali nužno nepotuno.

19. Vala egi. Jonathan Culler (1994) koje smo ranije naveli: "Ua pod mironi: teoretičar stvaralačkim beskonačnim korpusu djela koje upotrebljava dovodi u pitanje i promišlja način mišljenja [ ] koji neobno čini odlični, a čitatelja navodi na prečice koje ga potiču da drugogje razmišlja, promišlja ne drug način istraživanja koje ga strahuje" "tako je ono što misli izvan pogleda. Mo neš narodi da drugogje istraživanje naš predmet istraživanja i naš način istraživanja" (str. 13). I dodaje: "Prevod teorije je da našto dodavanje u pitanje naših [ ] postulat: ono što smo svjesni da znamo" (str. 15).

**Bar, Mele i Inge E. Bow** (1994) (ur), *The Poet of Theory: practices of cultural analysis*. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press.

**Brisset, Anne** (1992), *Sociologie de la traduction: textes et objets*. Québec (1988-1989), L'Édition, La Presse.

**Brulot, Elisabeth** (1994), "Death, the mood of the magic", u **Mele Bar i Inge E. Bow**, *The Poet of Theory*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, str. 79-90.

**Culler, Jonathan** (1981) (1992), "Literary theory", u **Joseph G. Gellert** (ur), *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*. New York, The Modern Language Association of America, str. 201-230.

**Culler, Jonathan** (1994), "Introduction: what is the point?", u **Mele Bar i Inge E. Bow**, *The Poet of Theory*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, str. 13-17.

**Fant, Joëlle** (1992), "Pourquoi le théâtre du théâtre?", *Scènes de la scène*, str. 9-10 (svakako svake nedjelje) Paris: L'Esprit du livre.

**Fant, Joëlle** (1992), "Pour une théorie des assemblés de tous", *Théâtre de la scène*, str. 58-61.

**Gadamer, Hans-Georg** (1960) (1985), *The Hermeneutic of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, prevod Nicholas Walker, Robert Bernasconi (ur), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Gadamer, Hans-Georg** (1987) (1990), *Truth and Method*, prevod Joel Weinsheimer i Donald Marshall, New York: Crossroad Press.

**Hally, Michael Ann** (1994), "Witnessing as Antiracism", u **Mele Bar i Inge E. Bow**, *The Poet of Theory*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, str. 220-221.

**Lakoff, George** (1987), "Metaphors as conceptual structures and scientific politics, or whatever happened to PTU?", *Modern Fiction Studies*, str. 33-34, str. 545-547.

**McHale, Brian** (1994), "Whatever happened to descriptive poetics?", u **Mele Bar i Inge E. Bow**, *The Poet of Theory*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, str. 54-66.

**Paz, Octavio**, Jacques Rabaud, Edouardo Sanguinetti, Charles Tomlinson (1971), *Renga*, Paris: Gallimard.

**Prigogine, Ilya i Isabelle Stengers** (1978), *La nouvelle alliance*, Paris: Gallimard.

**Prigogine, Ilya i Isabelle Stengers** (1985), *Time et chaos*, Paris: Fayard.

**Reiner, George** (1978) (1992), *Après la fin: une poétique du dire et de la traduction*, prevod s'engleščeg Lucienne Lohmeyer i Pierre Emmanuel Doucet, Paris: Albin Michel.

**Shuman, Sean** (1994), "In the long run, we must all be dead", u **Mele Bar i Inge E. Bow**, *The Poet of Theory*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, str. 125-137.

**Vattimo, Gianni** (1982), *La fin de la modernité*, Paris: Seuil.

**Viat, Antoine** (1991), *Le théâtre des idées*, Paris: Gallimard.

Naravno, ne radi se o tome da postoji između provođenja i teorije odredeno predstavo. Očigledno ih dvaju "praktičnih" postupaka su pričinio različit, ali ipak nije ništa manje točno da promatranjem teorijskog rada u određenoj perspektivi učimo o dihotomijama između mišljenja i djelovanja, tijela i duha, vizualnog i verbalnog, estetičkog i političkog u koje se proširilo zahranimo. Ovakav način promatranja, koji teoriju promatra kao napor da se prevede neko djelo i postupak, ipak omogućava da se svaki teorijski postupak ograniči određenim brojem apriorizama i nužnih pretpostavki, kao što su:

1. određeno situiranje, da ne kažemo temeljno promatranje djela i fenomena koj se želi proučavati,
2. određena ponudnost pred činom znanja i spoznaja koje su istodobno na djelu u reprezentaciji i u društvu koje je integrirano,
3. inkurzivni i ekstrinzivni postupak nasuprot praksi,
4. međuovisnost i dijaloz između prakse i teorije,
5. i napokon, nužnost da se na kraju postupka pronađe određena ravnoteža između izvora i cilja.

To nas promatranje također podjeđa na ono što strahito ne smije zaboraviti: da ga svako teoretičko čin prije svega postavlja kao subjekt iskazivanja koj je i sam nužno upisan u društvo i politiku diskursa koji prenosi.

Osim toga, čini se da se temeljno pitanje koje smo željeli postaviti o ulazi teorije pred kazališnom praksom podružuje pitanju svih diskurzivnih praksa, uključujući i prevodjenje i muziciranje. Mislimo, kao i teorija izražajnosti i znanstvena teorija, pokušava na svoj način reinterpretirati svijet, prevesti ga u skladu sa sebi svojstvenim parametrima. Pri tome on prevodi ono što ga okružuje, jednako kao što to radi i umjetnik sa svojom vlastitom praksom, ako drugih sredstava. Oba, naravno, imaju različite diskurse i njihovi su objavi jednaki: ciljan da se bude razumije svijet, istin i prakse koje nje okružuju.

Teorija se dakle zaista pojavljuje kao praksa drugačije prirode od umjetničke prakse, naravno, ali ipak kao praksa.

Tako ćemo, suprotno Brianu McHaleu, rado prihvatiti riječ Virgila L. Lokusa koji kaže: "Teorija nije nešto što je po svojoj esenciji superiorno praksi ili što je nadležnija. Radi se, u napojem slučaju, o drugom obliku diskurzivne prakse, objašnjenom određenim shemama i rječnikom oznakama koji u dani kulturi ukazuje da je diskurs pravao u teorijski oblik - odnosno da diskurs praktičara teoriju" (Lokus, citira ga McHale, 1994: 58). Ne radi se nam praktičan poput Petersa Brodskia i Antonia Viosa upravo primjer tog stalnog prijelaza između prakse i teorije? Upravo će samo na temelju te zajedničke osnove praksa i teorija moći dijalogirati i prestat se međusobno isključivati. Upravo će samo po cijenu vlastitog stalnog propitivanja teorija napokon izati iz zahranosti koja je preth.

# Provincija

Goran Sergej Pristaš

## 1. Festival svjetskog kazališta i mediji

Grad Zagreb nedavno je objavljen "teškom kulturnom provincijom". Događilo se to u najavama Festivala svjetskog kazališta, festivala koji je nedavno održan u Zagrebu. Toziko je ne može se s tom činjenicom ukoliko barem malo poznamo stanje na lokalnoj kazališnoj sceni. Odras zagrebačke kulturne provincijalnosti nebrojeni su i upravo se najzanimljivije običavaju na onome što su prvi rezultat Festivala svjetskog kazališta, a kako vrijeme prolazi medijima dostiže pokazuje svoje zasluge u verifikaciji ideologije kulturne normiranosti koja nam prodaje čokoladu s tekstovima kao sredstvo protiv ospitacije.

I sve što se događa u Zagrebu to potvrđuje. Nije li pokazatelj kulturne provincijalnosti Zagreba činjenica da, osim, u tom istom gradu djeluje čitav jedan niz kazališnih umjetnika koji prezentiraju hrvatsku scenu izvanbernih umjetnosti u inozemstvu, a od zarade plaćaju da bi igrali u Zagrebu i da to mediji ne vide? Nije li takav slučaj sa zagrebačkom plesnom scenom čiji koreografi i plesači osvajaju europske nagrade, gostuju na drugim kontinentima, a u Zagrebu igraju u rock klubovima, shopping centrima, trgovinama bez struje i dobrohotnih galerijama? Nema li mi provincija kad se već mjesecima po medijima pisa o potrebi proširivanja na još jednu scenu jednog nacionalnog kazališta nebitne produkcije, dok cijela generacija mladih redatelja tvore po akadémističkim scenografijama uz Javu? Ne bi li provincijalnost i bile tako razvidne da, recimo, prošle godine kao reprezentativni premijeri institucionalnog svjetskog redatelja nismo vidjeli Thomasa Ostermeiera koji ravnopravno djeli jednu od najboljih nacionalnih kazališnih kuća u Berlinu sa Sashom Waltz, najekstremijem njezemačkim provincijalnim proizvođačem nakon Pina Bauscha i da su njegovo gostovanje hrvatski kazališni izvjestitelji malo više kontekstualizirali kad su djeli hrvatsku scenu počke zbog njegove provincijalnosti? Zbog se nagde ne sponiraju da je tom Ostermeieru, o čijoj redateljskoj eksperimentalnosti uopće ne želimo obaviti raspravu Grad Berlin, poznat po tome da je u bankrotu, ponudio da za ravnateljstvo HNK bira Berliner Ensemble ili Deutsches Theater? Ne bi li bilo zanimljivo u jeku rasprave o financiranju HNK u Zagrebu čuti kako je isti Ostermeier trebao da se u kući koju je preuzeo, Schauspielhaus u Berlinu, opusti svi dotadašnji članovi ansambla i da je država platila odštete glumcima poput slavne Julije Lampke koji je samo trebala odšteti svoje posljednje godine od mirovine, a da je Sasha Waltz prihvatila posao nakon što su joj garantirali da će sveke novopozvani član plesnog (ne baletnog) ansambla primati mjesečno 3 000 DEM + bonus za predstave + 1 000 DEM doplatka za djecu + vrtić u sklopu kazališta... (vid Frajkuhu br. 18). Ne čini li se zanimljiv podatak da je u prvoj godini svog mandata imao na raspolaganju samo od Grada Berlina 22,5 milijuna DEM?

Nemamo li mi Bobu Jeličića koji nastupa na kurstenifestivale, najvećem svjetskom kazališnom festivalu biva proglašen najpoznatijim redateljem na Wiener Festwochen, nastupa na spektakularnom Theater der Welt festivalu, o čemu hrvatski javnost u većini dobije informaciju u dvotjedniku za kulturu da je riječ o internacionalnom zabavisti, proizvodu časopisa Frakcija (hrvatski na nezgodnim komplimentima).

Ne bi li bilo zanimljivo čuti kako je Emuntas Nekrošius, redatelj koji godinama nije našao svoje mjesto u ansamblima, dobio od grada Vilnusa cijelu trgovinu u koju je uložio ogroman novac samo za, eto le "rodopisne" predstave koje nam dovodi Festival svjetskog kazališta i čije je njegove države spremne posamošno financirati Nekrošiusove strane gostovanja? I nije li uz to značajno napomenuti da se upravo običavali biva iskani Pravde u centru Vilnusa gdje su tri mlade kazališne udruge dobile mogućnost otvaranja velikog kazališnog centra u kojem bi imali radu njihovi mladi redatelji poput Oskara Kortunovasa, Gintarasa Varnasa itd.?

Ne bi li bilo zanimljivo probati koliko svega od prikazanih nam umjetnika dobije za svoje produkcije od lokalnih novosti? Nedajmo, ne bi li bilo zanimljivo znati da je Joseph Nadj, Madar iz Kanjasa, dobio svoj teatar u Orleansu u Francuskoj i potporu koju može samo sanjati neki hrvatski nogometaš?

Nemamo li mi provincija kad znamo da smo tek nakon godinu dana u Zagrebu mogli samo jednu večer vidjeti predstavu "Schneewittchen" Ivce Buljana koji je dobio pola hrvatske i treće obič pola svijeta? Ili kad shvatimo da sve zagrebačke napravnice produkcije novog teatra nastaju u dubrovačkom Lazaratu i zajednici Borutim gdje imaju regulirane uvjete za rad? Ili kad ravnatelj naših teatara objavi da je bio u se i plesu isto što i što rjeđe ples?

Naravno da nije onome što već nekoliko godina plesnim umjetnicima u Hrvatskoj koji upozoravaju na problem prostora isto te umjetnike medijima neutralizira odgovorom da dobra predstava može nastati i u galeriji. Može nastati, može li se i igrati? Vjerojatno onoliko koliko je dovoljno kritičaru da napiše svoju kritiku i zaradi na njoj više no što jedan plesač može kad pokrije sve troškove njegova prostora, rasvjetu, rasgleda, videa.

Nije li paradoksalno provincijalno kad Nataša Govedić zauzimaq mjesto Milana Močaka na hrvatskoj sceni, prije da se prezentiranjem pet autora Festivala svjetskog kazališta "oslobađamo državu Mlaustrofobijske, sa sem

njazem poznatih estetskih mutacijama." Ili da "međunarodno priznato kazalište može biti eksploatirano pa i da eksperimentalno kazalište može biti međunarodno priznato." Nije li paradoksalno da to više autorica koje već dvije godine sustavno gaze po nezavršenoj i eksperimentalnoj sceni hrvatskog kazališta dok organiziraju izložbu i Gradskom uredom za kulturu i ne primajuju ni jedan kasi prilik kulturnih vlasti, nego eklatantno upućuje "Da, da i stopit da?" Pri tom čak ne uspijeva artikulirati ni naprednije upućuje te vlasti u otvaranju spram autorice, kulturne nadležnosti ili značajnog povećanja budžeta nezavršenoj kazališnoj sceni. Ne zna problematizirati ni marginalni položaj Gradskog ureda za kulturu u odnosu na druge ureds koje vjerojatno ni ne znaju čime se ovaj za kulturu zapravo bavi, jer novac je negdje drugdje. A u jednini je shvan pakiranja u pravu - "eksperimentalno kazalište može biti međunarodno priznato." Ali u Hrvatskoj ne i lokalno, što pokazuje najzreliji recenatni tekstovi o idejama skupljanja novokazališne scene i spominjanom festivalu.

U svojem članku u prigu *Mediteran* Noug lista, koji je i neposredni povod ovog teksta eko neam želo sudjelovati u javnoj raspravi koja je nametnuta igru podijelnu između dva tabora po principu "ili se i nema ili se probi nisi", Nataša Govedić pise o konsenzusu publike spram vednih predstava. Kao da zabore da takav konsenzus postoji na gotovo svako malo reprezentativnoj predstavi koja gostuje u pompoznom zagrebačkim kazalnim kućama. Po čemu se razlikuje pjesnik Teštro Ulysses, Karolin Alcock i Robertu Lapogeu pa i u sastavu publike? Upravo tako nedostaje razmatranje na konsenzusu pokazuje cijelu eliminaciju svake drugosti u teatralnom istu gledišta koja je većito uklonjena eliminacijom cijele jedne scene - preventivnim statim koji je pravo cijelu medijsku kampanju oko kazališta, što je čak dovelo do toga da se Gordana Vrhuk počne birati za nezavršenu scenu.

Postavlja se nova pitanja: može li Nataša Govedić (i s njom ostali medijski djelatnici) stavi u kontekst predstavu Josepha Nadj s predstavama istog autora koje je Zagreb video u njegovoj daleko višnjoj fazi još prije jednog desetljeća? Može li Nataša Govedić šta reći o današnjem Lapogeu predstavama i razlozima zašto je obnovio predstavu s kraja osamdesetih koju smo videli u Zagrebu? Može li napisati šta o tome zašto je Nikolaus napravio upravo takve dvije predstave kakve smo videli u Zagrebu? Ne može barem zato što Zagreb više nema normalni ovid u svjetskoj sceni, jer Zagreb ne žvi normalnim životom kulturnog grada koji tri puta mjesečno ugosti skóre ili mnogo finansijskog opsega predstave - nego obilva koncepti reprezentativnog predstave baš u momentu kad - recimo, Avignonisti festival takav koncept odbacuje i odužuje lokalisti novi autore, razvojni projekti, racionalni društveni problematizaciju teatra i izbšta itd. Na može jer je na svojeg u opservaciju uključuju pozicij proizvede nuka kazališnog konzumerizma koji pod kinom kritičkog pristupa verifika uključuju dominantne strategije provinsijalnog oblikovanja kulturne scene - kulturnu prethodnost bez lokalne scene, kazu bez kultura. I tu se čak manje zamjerke mogu postaviti protivstavlja programa koji su angažirali sponzoriranih 1.500.000 kuna koje su neuspodivši s tim likovno gutaju upravo on čijem se oduživanju divi Nataša Govedić - zaposlenici u državnim teatrima. Jer se čemo se složiti da nam strana gostovanje reprezentativnih predstava trebaju i trbaju ovaj grad još vidjeti i Corcoran, Mathiasa, Maxwella, Stuart, Forsythe, Raffaele Serrao, Sallama, ali ne po tu ognu da nam netko spobava potrebu za djelovanjem na vlastitoj sceni jednako to možemo s sami autorima na međunarodnoj. A je i Nataša Govedić o konsenzusu možda pitala sve one umjetnike koji se nisu mogli pružiti ulaznice za taj festival za razliku od lumpen-buržoazije koja i danas raspravlja o tome ima li dramaturškog opravdanja da Lara Croft ubije Torvela u predstavu o lumpen-buržoaziji? I molim vas lijepo - kad je konsenzus bio važan kritičar za umjetnost?

A što je taj provincio ostalo od festivala s ovakvom medijskom i konsenzusnom recepcijom? Provincio je dobilo još jednu u lancu svjetskih manifestacija kakve su upravo otupile otkidno gostujućih autora odužujući od njih ponavljanje primarno kritičnih oblikovanja. Što ostaje lokalnoj sceni nakon ovog festivala? Prvo ispitaji, jer ni jedan od recenzista koje vlasti odbacuje nije spreman angažirati prepoznane redatelje u Hrvatskoj, što je bio prijedlog najistaknutiji opozicionara festivala. Drugo bazi radi, jer se javno priznaje shvateno promijanje strategije kulturnog razvoja promatranjem nadomestaka u potrošenim modelima. U tom pogledu bi čak zanimljivo bilo i oduku da zagrebačka kultura postane u potpunosti festivalski kultura, bescenzurno kazališna zona, u kojoj će svoj smisao krajnje izgubiti institucije poput HNK-a (bajragući se između HNE, Severina i psa brnce Jusčić) i postati prometcinom europskog kulturnog kapitala i izbšta - kroz Hrvatsku bto samo bez puno ispušnih plinova.

No rasprave od svega što se desetljećima ponijela u propovjedima hrvatskom kazalištu jesu dva još nepobijedivi principa: beskraja edukacije i hrvatsko (konsenzusno) glumište. Prvo, istino doonanje karakterskično je upravo za provincije istočne Europe koje svoju međunarodnu ulogu vide u prodaji etniciteta i uvazu znanja. Pri tom suradnja koja je inherentna nereguliranoj umjetničkom radu ne uspijeva probiti kroz hrvatske med-ele organizacije. Festival imaju nametnute karaktere i njihov objekt nje predstave. Umjetnici putuju u svijet. No, kad država apsoluti okupa festival, onda predstave-provod bavi jedin objekat interesa. Drugo, idaj hrvatskog glumišta kad ideja možda postala je represivnom idejom hierarhiziranog jedinstva u kojem su u istoj kadi HNK-i i alternativne grupe, ali nepozvano pravilo njihovije dodjeljuje pravo većine - istoj se kadi bez predužuje i festival čiji bi pravo prvenstva odbacivao upravo lični glumište konsenzus, koji mora odbaciti sve transigencije ne bi li formirao to glumište. I zato ne čudi da namaj Dubrovačkih (njih gora prostoj ipito u intervjuu sgovor dva kulturna skandala, to da u Dubrovniku više nema potrebe za velikim stranom gostovanjem jer ce se sad događati u Zagrebu i to da je izumiralo da nove grupe moraju pisati programski oblikovanja za francijanci svojih programa, ali zašto bi to morali jedini "ugledni i potvrđeni" manifestacija koja trče desetljećima mijenja čogo vod. Ne mora jer njegove odgovore veriforaju oni koji mu postavljaju pitanja i oni koji ga bezuvjetno financiraju. Pa tako napuštaju državni festival legitimno postaje provincijskom manifestacijom, a upomene ne Marce Cunningham i Teštro Brown delegira u povijest gdje mu je i mjesto. Pri tom festival koji hoće igrati pojedenu ulogu relativne važnosti provodnje povijesti i moguću događaju utapa u situacionizam u kojem ovdjaju medijski pamćenje okusovanih nadomestaka.



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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased by 1.5 million, from 2.5 million in 1980 to 4 million in 1995. The public sector has become a major employer in the UK, and its growth has been a major factor in the overall growth of the economy.

The public sector has also become a major employer of women. In 1980, women made up 40% of the public sector workforce, and by 1995, this figure had risen to 50%. This increase has been driven by a number of factors, including the growth of the public sector, the increasing participation of women in the workforce, and the increasing demand for public services.

The public sector has also become a major employer of people with disabilities. In 1980, people with disabilities made up 10% of the public sector workforce, and by 1995, this figure had risen to 20%. This increase has been driven by a number of factors, including the growth of the public sector, the increasing participation of people with disabilities in the workforce, and the increasing demand for public services.

The public sector has also become a major employer of people from ethnic minorities. In 1980, people from ethnic minorities made up 5% of the public sector workforce, and by 1995, this figure had risen to 15%. This increase has been driven by a number of factors, including the growth of the public sector, the increasing participation of people from ethnic minorities in the workforce, and the increasing demand for public services.

The public sector has also become a major employer of people from the lower social classes. In 1980, people from the lower social classes made up 30% of the public sector workforce, and by 1995, this figure had risen to 40%. This increase has been driven by a number of factors, including the growth of the public sector, the increasing participation of people from the lower social classes in the workforce, and the increasing demand for public services.

The public sector has also become a major employer of people from the lower income groups. In 1980, people from the lower income groups made up 20% of the public sector workforce, and by 1995, this figure had risen to 30%. This increase has been driven by a number of factors, including the growth of the public sector, the increasing participation of people from the lower income groups in the workforce, and the increasing demand for public services.

The public sector has also become a major employer of people from the lower education levels. In 1980, people from the lower education levels made up 15% of the public sector workforce, and by 1995, this figure had risen to 25%. This increase has been driven by a number of factors, including the growth of the public sector, the increasing participation of people from the lower education levels in the workforce, and the increasing demand for public services.

The public sector has also become a major employer of people from the lower health status. In 1980, people from the lower health status made up 10% of the public sector workforce, and by 1995, this figure had risen to 20%. This increase has been driven by a number of factors, including the growth of the public sector, the increasing participation of people from the lower health status in the workforce, and the increasing demand for public services.

The public sector has also become a major employer of people from the lower life expectancy. In 1980, people from the lower life expectancy made up 5% of the public sector workforce, and by 1995, this figure had risen to 15%. This increase has been driven by a number of factors, including the growth of the public sector, the increasing participation of people from the lower life expectancy in the workforce, and the increasing demand for public services.

The public sector has also become a major employer of people from the lower quality of life. In 1980, people from the lower quality of life made up 5% of the public sector workforce, and by 1995, this figure had risen to 15%. This increase has been driven by a number of factors, including the growth of the public sector, the increasing participation of people from the lower quality of life in the workforce, and the increasing demand for public services.

The public sector has also become a major employer of people from the lower social capital. In 1980, people from the lower social capital made up 5% of the public sector workforce, and by 1995, this figure had risen to 15%. This increase has been driven by a number of factors, including the growth of the public sector, the increasing participation of people from the lower social capital in the workforce, and the increasing demand for public services.

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